Banana Bureddo no Pudingu

Ch-1

HotCakes Proudly Presents

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バナナブレッドのプディング

大島弓子 *Yumiko OSHIMA*

banana bread pudding

白泉社文庫 Hakusensha Bunko

バナナブレッドのプディング

Banana Bread Pudding

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大島弓子

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TOHAN
客注
書店：07366
1 4 3 8
受注　：2009/05/18　88118086
商品CD：ISBN978-4-592-88352-4 ¥：77015242
作業CD：９９東５２　（０１海０４）
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-88352-7
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97
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Banana Bread Pudding

"TODAY IS THE DAY BEFORE TOMORROW. IT SCARES ME SO MUCH THAT I JUST CAN'T HELP IT." IRA MIURA IS A LITTLE STRANGE, AND HER PARENTS ARE EMBARRASSED ABOUT IT. IRA'S CHILDHOOD FRIEND OCHAYA SAEKO TELLS IRA THAT SHE'LL GET HER A BOYFRIEND, BUT IRA'S PERFECT MAN JUST SO HAPPENS TO BE "A GAY MAN WHO FEELS TOO GUILTY TO REVEAL HIS SECRET TO SOCIETY." SAEKO SETS OFF TO FIND A MAN THAT FITS IRA'S DESCRIPTION, BUT...?

THIS COLLECTION INCLUDES THE TITLE STORY, "BANANA BREAD PUDDING" ABOUT A DELICATE GIRL'S ADOLESCENCE, ALONG WITH THREE OTHER SHORT STORIES.

Kinokuniya
バナナブレッドのプディング
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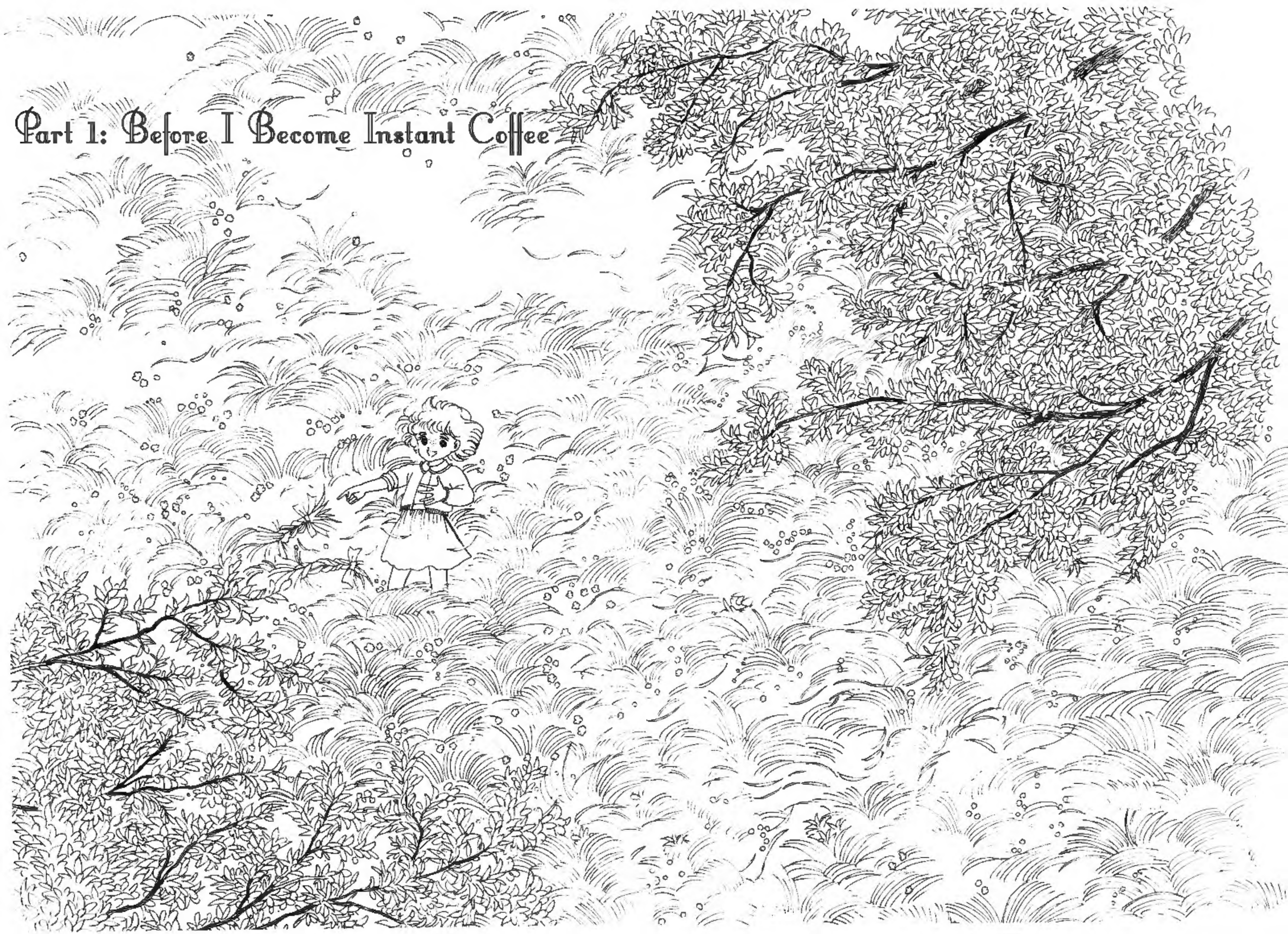
...
BECAUSE TODAY IS THE DAY BEFORE TOMORROW.

SAY, NEW GIRL ...

WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SO SERIOUS? YOU ACT AS THOUGH THE WORLD WAS ENDING THIS VERY DAY.

IT SCARES ME SO MUCH THAT I JUST CAN'T HELP IT.

Part 1: Before I Become Instant Coffee



YOU MAY CALL ME IRRITATED IRA.

MY NAME IS MIURA IRA.

TALK A LITTLE MORE, SO THE CLASS CAN GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER.

IT'S BECAUSE MY SISTER IS GETTING MARRIED TOMORROW. IT WILL ALSO BE THE DAY I BECOME INSTANT COFFEE.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW WHY I'M SO IRRITATED AND SERIOUS,

WHAT I MEAN IS THAT TOMORROW WILL BE SO SCARY FOR ME THAT MY BLOOD WILL FREEZE DRY.

IS THAT A QUOTE FROM SOMEWHERE?

I THINK I'D LIKE TO EAT SOME BANANA BREAD PUDDING.

SO, ANYTHING ELSE? A HOBBY, OR SOMETHING THAT REALLY INTERESTS YOU AT THE MOMENT, FOR EXAMPLE... KEEP IT SIMPLE.

SYMBOLICALLY, RIGHT?

SNORT

smile smile smile

snicker

WHAT COULD THAT SYMBOLIC-SOUNDING PUDDING OF YOURS BE, I WONDER?

EVERYTHING THEY SAY IS LIKE SOMETHING STRAIGHT OUT OF FREUD ...

W-WHAT ARE KIDS THESE DAYS THINKING...?!

RATTLE がた

MAY I ASK THE TRANSFER STUDENT A QUESTION?

snicker

HOME ROOM IS OVER! EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY!

I SAW IT IN A MAGAZINE THE OTHER DAY.

THE BELL HASN'T RUNG YET. I DON'T MIND EXPLAINING ...

NEW GIRL!

YES!

SHALL I EXPLAIN IT...?

WE'RE ALL OUT OF TIME! PLEASE TAKE YOUR SEAT.

SLAM

POUND POUND POUND

KYAAAH!

IRA! ENOUGH, ENOUGH! IT'S BEEN SO LONG!

IT'S A DESSERT WHERE YOU FINELY SLICE SOME BREAD AND MIX IT IN A MOLD WITH EQUAL PARTS MILK, EGGS, AND SUGAR. THEN YOU JUST PUT THIN PIECES OF BANANA ON TOP...

I SAW IT IN A MAGAZINE THE OTHER DAY.

YAY! YAY!

I'VE BEEN HERE SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL.

AS I WAS ENTERING HIGH SCHOOL MY DAD GOT TRANSFERRED AND MOVED UP NORTH, BUT MY BROTHER AND I CHOSE TO STAY BEHIND AND RENT AN APARTMENT BY OURSELVES.

UM... THE ONE I WAS FRIENDS WITH MY FIRST YEAR OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...?

OCHA-YA?

IT'S ME, OCHAYA SAEKO!

HUH?

REALLY?! SAEKO-CHAN?!

YEAH!

HEY, HEY. REMEMBER HOW WE USED TO PLAY BY GOING TO VACANT LOTS TOGETHER AND BRAIDING THE OVER-GROWN GRASS?

YEAH, WE DID DO THAT, HUH! WE EVEN TIED BOWS ON THEM.

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT... YOU'RE ALL GROWN UP.

NO WAY! ONLY ON THE OUTSIDE! I HAVEN'T CHANGED ONE TINY BIT SINCE I SAW YOU LAST.

YOU'RE A WOMAN NOW.

YOU'VE CHANGED A LOT TOO, IRA.

I STILL GO TO THE PARK SOMETIMES AND DO THAT, YOU KNOW.

THE GRASS SEEMED SO HAPPY.

AND I STILL CAN'T GO TO THE BATHROOM ALONE WHEN I THINK OF THAT STORY FROM WHEN WE WERE KIDS.

...

NO, I DO! RIBBONS AND EVERY-THING!

... YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

IF I HAVE TO GO TO THE BATHROOM LATE AT NIGHT, I HAVE MY SISTER ACT AS A LOOKOUT.

YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

I GET SO SCARED THAT I CAN'T LEAVE MY ROOM PAST 10:00.

UM, YOU MEAN... THE ONE MY GRANDPA TOLD US WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING OVER AT MY HOUSE?

YEAH. THE STORY WHERE IF YOU STAY UP PAST 10 O'CLOCK, A PERSON WITH A FACE SO BEAUTIFUL YOU CAN'T TELL IF THEY'RE MAN OR WOMAN WILL APPEAR.

BUT THAT'S NOT ALL! I DON'T MIND TELLING YOU, BECAUSE YOU KNOW I'M COMPLETELY NORMAL!

YOU COULD SAY THAT.

SO WHEN YOU SAY THAT YOUR SISTER'S MARRIAGE WILL CAUSE YOUR BLOOD TO FREEZE DRY...

IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE SCARED THAT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GO TO THE BATH-ROOM TOGETHER ANYMORE...?!

Come on.

I don't bite.

THEN THEY'LL STUFF YOU IN THEIR GIANT BAG, PUT YOU RIGHT INTO A MEAT GRINDER, AND EAT YOU.

BUT MY PARENTS DON'T UNDERSTAND. I HEARD THEM TALKING ONE EVENING, AND WHAT THEY SAID WAS SO SAD THAT IT MADE ME WANT TO CRY.

I HEARD THEM WHISPERING ABOUT PUTTING ME UNDER PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION.

WE CAN'T DO IT NOW BECAUSE HER SISTER'S APPROACHING THE AGE WHERE SHE NEEDS TO START THINK NG ABOUT MARRIAGE. OUR FAMILY DOESN'T HAVE ANY HISTORY OF INSANITY, BUT TO GET HER EVALUATED NOW COULD CAUSE AN UNNECESSARY HINDRANCE TO THAT.

THEN SHALL WE GET HER LOOKED AT AFTER HER SISTER GETS MARRIED?

I'D LIKE TO ASK ANOTHER QUESTION, IF YOU DON'T MIND...

SO, WHY WAS EVERYONE LAUGHING AT "BANANA BREAD PUDDING?"

.. .. ..

CRY CRY

I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO SOMEONE NICE!

I'M SURE YOU'D STRAIGHTEN RIGHT UP IF YOU GOT A BOYFRIEND.

U-UM... THIS IS A QUICK JUDGMENT ON MY PART, BUT ..

IT WAS BECAUSE I WANTED TO EAT SUCH A CHILDISH DESSERT, RIGHT?

I DON'T NEED A BOYFRIEND.. THIS IS NO TIME TO BE THINKING ABOUT MEN. I TOLD YOU THAT ONCE MY SISTER GETS MARRIED, I...!

THAT'S WHY YOU NEED SOMEONE! IF YOU DON'T OPEN UP TO THE IDEA, YOU'LL ALWAYS BE TOO SCARED TO FALL IN LOVE, YOU KNOW!

LOVE?

LOVE...?!

GREAT! TELL ME! I HAVE A LOT OF MALE FRIENDS SO AT LEAST ONE OF THEM IS SURE TO FIT THE BILL!

I USED TO HAVE AN IMAGE OF THE PERFECT MAN.

Club Room

A GAY MAN WITH A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.

A GAY MAN WHO FEELS TOO GUILTY TO REVEAL HIS SECRET TO SOCIETY.

SORRY, COULD YOU REPEAT THAT...?

'ELLO!

HEEEY!

I'LL LOOK INTO IT.

YOU WAIT HERE.

SHE REALLY DID SAY A GAY MAN, HUH..

BETTER THAN PAIRING HER OFF WITH A WOMANIZER RIGHT OFF THE BAT, I GUESS.

I HAVE SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO ASK ALL OF YOU.

I'M NOT LOOKING FOR MY BROTHER.

COACH HASN'T ARRIVED FROM THE COLLEGE YET.

I'M NOT!

WELL I'M NOT.

I'M JUST ASKING. IT'S TOTALLY FINE IF YOU'RE NOT.

NO!

HMM.

I'LL START FROM THIS END.

ARE YOU GAY?

What is it? What is it?

OR MAYBE MY MANNERISMS? OH, COME ON! TELL ME HOW YOU KNEW!

So there was one gay man. But

HE'S NOT A GOOD MATCH FOR IRA. HE'S POSITIVELY SHAMELESS...

Pleased

I'M DEVASTATED! I HAD A CRUSH ON HIM... THIS IS ABSOLUTELY SHOCKING!

Y- your face

WONDERFUL!

...WELL THEN, I BELIEVE THAT'S EVERYBODY...

CREAK

THIS WON'T WORK... WHAT SHOULD I DO? IRA'S WAITING RIGHT OUTSIDE.

UGH! NO! NO WAY!

I LIKE WOMEN, OBVIOUSLY!

I'VE GOT NO INTEREST IN MEN!

NO THANK YOU.

WELL, I'VE READ GENÊT, BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME GAY.

NOT ME!

KYAA!

HOW DID YOU KNOW? WAS IT THE WAY I WALK, PERHAPS?

T/N : Genêt is a French writer who liked to challenge the 'morality' of his readers.

YEEEEAH!

HE'S NO GOOD... HE'S YOUR TYPICAL WOMANIZER...

HUH? DID YOU NEED SOMETHING, SAEKO?

OI, WHO HERE HAD THE INSOLENCE TO LEAVE THEIR GIRLFRIEND STANDING ALONE OUTSIDE?

HEY!

IS EVERYONE HERE?!

NO! WAIT! SHE'S...!

stampeding

A GIRL?! EEEEH?!

JUST STAY OUT THERE AND LINE UP ON THE FIELD!

stampeding

KYAAAA!

ARE YOU... THE ONE?

...SO IF SHE'S NOT SOMEONE'S GIRLFRIEND... MAYBE I SHOULD ASK HER OUT FOR TEA.

hehehe

stampeding

どどどどどど

HUH?

YOU'RE PERFECT. I FELT SO NOSTALGIC WHEN YOU WALKED PAST EARLIER.

SO YOU'LL BE MY FRIEND...?

I'D BE GLAD TO. I WAS ABOUT TO ASK YOU THE SAME THING.

YOU WANT ME TO BE YOUR FRIEND?

WAIT A MINUTE!

EH...? AH... NO, THIS IS MY ..

OCHA-YA?

MY BROTHER MAY BE A PLAYBOY WHO'S HAD AN UNACCOUNTABLY LARGE NUMBER OF WOMEN, BUT HE WOULD NEVER BE CRUEL.

THIS MIGHT JUST WORK. YES, THIS IS THE SAFEST WAY.

I SEE. I'M OCHAYA TOUGE. I'M CURRENTLY ATTENDING MY SECOND YEAR AT X UNIVERSITY.

MY NAME IS MIURA IRA. I TRANSFERRED TO THIS SCHOOL JUST TODAY.

THIS IS GREAT!

YEAH!

I CAN'T SAY I REMEMBER THAT, BUT LET'S PLAY HOPSCOTCH AGAIN SOMETIME.

SURE!

TRAINING ENDS AT 4 O'CLOCK. HOW ABOUT MEETING IN THE PARK AFTERWARDS?

YUP.

YOU'RE SAEKO-CHAN'S BROTHER?!

YAY! THAT'S WHY I FELT SO NOSTALGIC!

I USED TO COME OVER AND PLAY MY FIRST YEAR OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL! SOMETIMES YOU WOULD EVEN PLAY HOPSCOTCH WITH US!

YEAH, YEAH.

SHOW HER AROUND THE SCHOOL UNTIL THEN, SIS.

THEN IT'S DECIDED!

HAHA!

THAT DOESN'T MATTER NOW, THOUGH!

MY BROTHER DIDN'T REMEMBER YOU.

I'M SORRY...

WHATEVER HAPPENS HAPPENS.

thud thud

NO WONDER

DING DONG

AH! MY BROTHER'S HERE.

AAH, SO IT'S HOPELESS... I'M SO HEART-BROKEN...

NO WONDER OUGAMI-KUN HAS NEVER HAD A GIRLFRIEND.

OUT-LINE?

NOW, LET'S SEE WHO'LL GO FIRST. ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS.

I can't believe we're actually doing this

POW

BUT I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER HOW THIS GAME IS PLAYED.

WINNING IS ONE THING,

I DREW THE OUTLINE FOR HOPSCOTCH.

HEY! I CAME EARLY.

I'LL EXPLAIN IT, SO JUST WATCH ME. YOU'LL REMEMBER IN NO TIME.

IF YOU MAKE IT IN, YOU HAVE TO HOP TOWARDS THE ROCK ON ONE FOOT

THEN PICK IT UP AND TOSS THE ROCK INTO THE FIRST SQUARE.

STEP ON IT.

THROW THE ROCK.

AND THEN HOP BACK TO YOUR STARTING PLACE.

PICK UP THE ROCK WHILE STILL ON ONE FOOT,

HOP HOP HOP HOP HOP HOP HOP HOP

JUMP JUMP ケンケン

IF YOU MAKE IT, YOU HAVE TO THROW THE ROCK INTO THE SECOND SQUARE, WHICH IS EVEN FURTHER!

Hmm

pow

YIKES! HER FACE WAS DEAD SERIOUS WHEN SHE CALLED ME OUT.

NOW IT'S MY TURN.

YOU'RE OUT! YOU STEPPED ON THE LINE!

pow

So serious.

YOU'RE MY OPPONENT!

LET'S DO IT TOGETHER.

THE FIRST PERSON TO MAKE IT TO THE LAST SQUARE AND BACK WINS. HOW MANY ROUNDS SHOULD WE PLAY?

ONCE ONE OF US LOSES A CERTAIN NUMBER OF ROUNDS, THAT PERSON HAS TO GIVE SOMETHING OF IMPORTANCE TO THE WINNER.

HOW DO YOU WIN THIS GAME?

WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME IF I WIN? IT HAS TO BE SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO YOU!

A DOLL ...?!

OH? WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME?

IF YOU WIN I'LL GIVE YOU MY FAVORITE DOLL, OF COURSE!

EH?

A MARRIAGE OF FORMALITY. STARTING TOMORROW.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING, YOU COULD JUST MARRY ME.

I SURE AM GIVING THIS A LOT OF THOUGHT

HMMM ...

WHAT ABOUT MY FOUNTAIN PEN...? NAH, I'D BE IN TROUBLE IF I DIDN'T HAVE THAT.

I CAN'T GIVE YOU MY SISTER ..HUH?

SOMETHING IMPORTANT ..?

I WORKED FOR ONE YEAR STRAIGHT TO BUY THAT TECHNICAL BOOK...

GREAT.

ALRIGHT! THREE ROUNDS!

...

AND PERHAPS I CAN SEAL IT WITH A KISS.

ALRIGHT! I'LL DO IT. IF YOU WIN, I'LL MARRY YOU.

OH, OK THEN. THAT DOLL THING MUST'VE BEEN A JOKE, TOO.. I'VE BEEN UNUSUALLY GULLIBLE TODAY!

THE VOWS ARE TOMORROW! I'LL BRING A SMALL CAKE. THEN WE CAN BE TOGETHER!

AND NOW TO PROFESS MY LOVE TO MY NEW FIANCÉE.

Heh heh heh

I LET HER.

TAP

I'M MUCH MORE LIKELY TO GET A KISS OUT OF THIS BY GOING WITH "MARRIAGE" OVER "A DOLL."

You did it, señorita.

YEAH! JUST WAIT UNTIL THEN.

AT MY APART-MENT?

TOMOR-ROW?

I'LL DRAW A MAP FOR YOU, THEN.

I'LL HAVE TO MAKE SAEKO CLEAN TODAY. AND CHANGE THE SHEETS...

I NEVER WOULD'VE TAKEN HER FOR THE AGGRESSIVE TYPE!

CLICK

I WIN!

MY BROTHER LOST. THAT MEANS, AS OF TOMORROW, HE'S A MARRIED MAN.

I'LL HAVE THE SANDWICH, A HOT DOG, POTATO CHIPS, AND, UM, CURRY BREAD. YOU?

MENU

I'LL HAVE A HOT DOG AND COFFEE.

カタン

CLATTER

I can see

why he turned gay

He's Beau-tiful

OH! THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY. BETTER KEEP QUIET.

THAT'S BECAUSE I JUST GOT DONE WITH TRAINING. MY STOMACH'S BEEN GROWLING THIS WHOLE TIME.

YOU SURE ARE A BIG EATER.

I'VE GOT TO KEEP SAEKO OUT OF THE HOUSE TOMORROW.

THAT'S GREAT.

I'M A GOOD COOK. I'LL MAKE YOU PLENTY OF FOOD.

Oh That was a good line.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY I LOST.

I...

YES. I'M SURE I'LL PICK IT UP ONCE I START GOING OUT WITH YOU [illegible] DAY.

MY NEEDS ...?

THAT I CAN [illegible] YOUR NEEDS

MY LIFE

ROSES?

THERE WERE ROSE BUSHES AT THE EDGES OF THE GARDEN AT MY OLD HOUSE.

I FINALLY UNDERSTAND THEIR WORDS.

"THANK YOU. WE WERE LONELY."

"THANK YOU. YOU'VE MADE US HAPPY."

THE BUSHES SPOKE TO ME VERY CLEARLY. I HEARD THEM.

MY HANDS AND FEET WERE FROZEN, AND JUST WHEN I THOUGHT THAT I MIGHT GO INSANE...

THE BUSHES USED TO MAKE NOISES WHEN I PASSED THROUGH THE GARDEN ON WINTER EVENINGS.

SCRITCH SCRATCH, SCRITCH SCRATCH!

BUT WHEN I LOOKED OVER, IT WAS JUST THE SOUND OF THE WIND CAUSING THE BRANCHES TO HIT THE FENCE.

WHEN I TRIED TO GO TO SLEEP AT NIGHT, THAT NOISE SOUNDED STRANGELY LIKE THE BUSHES WERE CALLING OUT TO ME IN THE SILENCE.

IT STARTED TO WORRY ME, SO I WENT AND SAT AMONG THE BUSHES IN JUST MY JACKET, WAITING FOR DAWN.

BANG, SCRATCH SCRATCH

SCRITCH SCRITCH

BANG

SCRITCH SCRITCH

TIME PASSED AND BEFORE I KNEW IT IT WAS AFTER-NOON, THEN EVENING, AND IT GREW PIERCINGLY COLD...

CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH

MY SISTER NODDED AT ME. SO YOU SEE, I HAVE CONFIDENCE. I CAN EASILY UNDERSTAND ANYONE!

STU-PID!

I TRIED TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO MY MOTHER, BUT SHE WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND. SHE JUST GOT ANGRY.

FROM THEN ON, THOUGH I DON'T TAKE WELL TO THE COLD, I WOULD OCCASIONALLY SPEND A FULL DAY OUT IN THE GARDEN..

I DEVELOPED PNEUMONIA.

CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH

I FELL DEATHLY SILENT.

I'LL BE SURE TO CLEAN THE APARTMENT AND CHANGE THE SHEETS AND TABLECLOTH BEFORE I GO TO MY FRIEND'S HOUSE TOMORROW.

WE HAD A GREAT TIME. SHE'S COMING OVER TOMORROW. I WANT YOU TO GO OUT FOR THE DAY, ALRIGHT?

I MADE SOME TEA, BRO.

HUH? YOU'RE BEING SUSPICIOUSLY AGREEABLE.

AH, SHE'S HERE!

JOG JOG JOG

HEART THUMPING

"WHY DO YOU HAVE TO GET MARRIED? WHY ARE YOU GOING AWAY? DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE ME ALL ALONE?!"

Hysterical

RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE

IRA WILL BE HOME SOON. SHE'LL START SCREAMING AND CRYING IF SHE SEES THAT DRESS AGAIN.

PUT THE DRESS AWAY.

Miura

flustered...

SLAM

NOW NOW, IT'S TIME FOR DINNER. COME ON, LET'S EAT.

IRA! YOU CAN'T CRY!

THE VEIL!

rustle

AAAAAAH!

COME, COME! TIME FOR DINNER!

YOU FINISHED SEWING THE VEIL...?

...HAVE...

...NOT YET, IRA.

TO BE HONEST, I HAVEN'T GIVEN UP...

SARA. I'LL DO IT.

LOOK. IT'S STILL HELD TOGETHER WITH TEMPORARY BASTING THREAD.

I DECIDED THAT I WANT TO WEAR A VEIL THAT YOU, MOTHER AND I ALL HAD A HAND IN SEWING.

THIS IS WHERE I WANT YOU TO SEW, IRA.

..
YO.. YOU KNEW...?

IRA, DO YOU KNOW WHAT MY HEART IS SAYING RIGHT NOW?

YOU JUST SAID IT, IRA..

IN YOUR HEART YOU'RE SAYING 'CONGRATULATIONS', RIGHT?

BEEN ABLE TO SAY IT UNTIL NOW, BUT ..

I... HAVEN'T...

I WANT .. TO T-TELL YOU..

THAT'S RIGHT!

'THANK YOU'? ..

THANK YOU, IRA.

SARA!

SARA, WAKE UP. I'M SCARED OF THE HALLWAY. I'M SCARED OF GROUND MEAT. I'M SCARED OF FATHER'S PAINTING.

SARA.

SARA, WAIT.

NOD FOR ME, SARA.

ding
dong

MY FAVORITE PERSON IN THE WORLD.

SARAAAA!

YOU'RE THE PRETTIEST, KINDEST, MOST PEACEFUL PERSON I KNOW.

OOOH!

LIKE A PAINTING!

YOU LOOK GOR-GEOUS!

CONG-RATULA-TIONS!

CONG-RATULA-TIONS!

CONGRATULATIONS, SARA

Oh?

Where's Ira?

GIVE ME YOUR BLESSINGS, TOO.

clatter clatter

CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU TOO, MOM AND DAD

clatter clatter

EXCUSE ME! HOLD THE RECEPTION OFF FOR TEN MINUTES, PLEASE!

PS. I REALLY AM FINE.

WAS SHE THERE FOR THE COMMEMORATIVE PHOTOGRAPHS?

HUH? I LOOKED AROUND FOR HER DURING THE CEREMONY, TOO.

clatter clatter

I... I AM FINE I WILL COME OVER TO VISIT FROM TIME TO TIME.

I AM ALSO GETTING MARRIED TODAY. I AM DOING SO WITHOUT TELLING YOU BEFOREHAND BECAUSE YOU ARE SURE TO OBJECT.

IRA-CHAN?

IF SHE DOESN'T COME WITH ME I MIGHT JUST. .

SHE'S PROBABLY OFF WEEPING AGAIN..

IRA!

SLAM

SHE'S ACTING IRRATIONALLY AGAIN.

DID SHE SAY MARRIED?!

WHAT'S THIS?

MARRIED . . .?!

IRA?

THIS PLAIN SWEATER WAS A GREAT CHOICE.

DO YOUR THING, CHARMING SMILE!

THE FLOOR, THE DESK . .

EVERY-THING'S SPARKLING CLEAN.

YOU'RE BEING IRRA-TIONAL!

I CANNOT BE IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE, SO I THOUGHT I WOULD WRITE A LETTER TO *MY BELOVED* BROTHER.

THERE'S A LETTER HERE.

HM?

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE IRA COMES OVER TO BE MARRIED THIS IS AN ACT OF MERCY, MY BELOVED BROTHER. YOU ARE GOING TO PREVENT A YOUNG GIRL FROM FALLING OVER A CLIFF.

"BELOVED BROTHER?!" I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

IN HER MIND YOU ARE A GAY MAN WHO HAS GONE THROUGH LIFE ALWAYS FEELING GUILTY ABOUT REVEALING H S SECRET TO SOCIETY, AND IS DESPERATE FOR A HELPING HAND.

SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO REJECT IRA NOW, THE GEARS IN HER HEAD WILL STOP TURNING. SHE WILL BE HOSPITAL-BOUND

I'M STARTING TO FEEL UNEASY.

WHICH IS WHY I AM OFF TO PERSUADE THEM OTHER-WISE.

THAT'S RIGHT! HER PARENTS WOULD NEVER GO ALONG SOMETHING SO RIDICULOUS!

HER WEDDING PROPOSAL WAS REAL, AND YOU ACCEPTED, MY BELOVED BROTHER.

ME?!

GAY?!

HER PARENTS WON'T LET THIS SLIDE!

droop たら

IF THAT TIME COMES, I WILL EXPLAIN YOUR SITUATION TO THE OTHER WOMAN. BESIDES, I BELIEVE YOU SAID THAT YOU WOULD NOT GET MARRIED UNTIL YOU ARE THIRTY.

THIS MAKES NO SENSE. I'M AT A MARRYING AGE. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF... I WANTED TO MARRY ANOTHER WOMAN?

G... GULP

EVEN IF I WAS WITH YOU?

Uuu...

EVEN I COULD BECOME A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING!

YOU'RE TELLING ME TO ACT GAY? LIKE I HAVE NO INTEREST IN WOMEN?

TAKE A DEEP BREATH. I HAVE TO READ THE SECOND PAGE.

RUSTLE

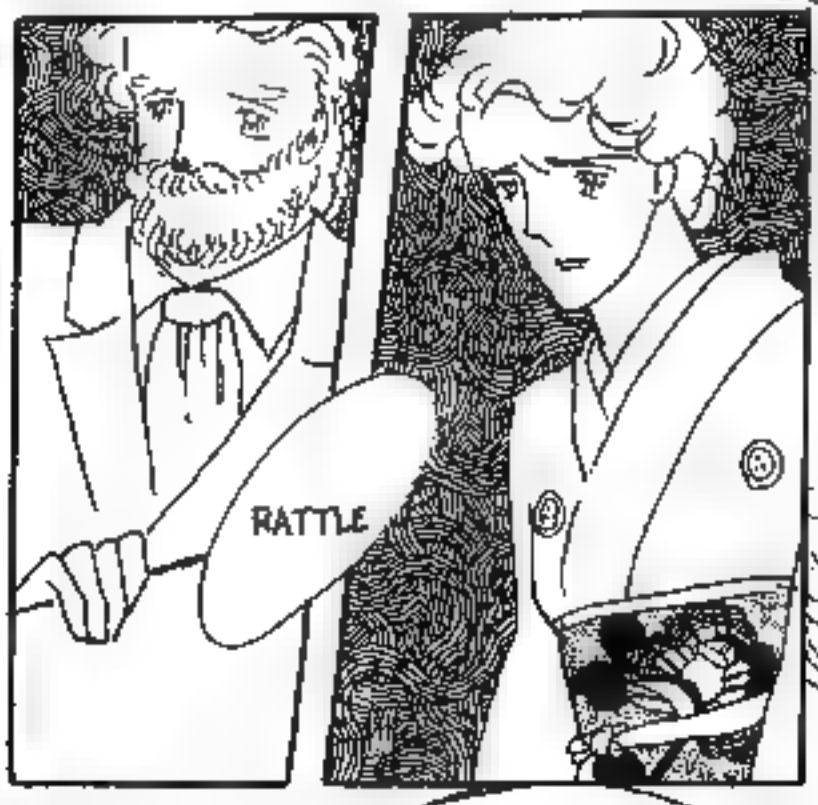
TO PUT IT SIMPLY, YOU MAY ACT INTELLECTUALLY IN THE APARTMENT AND PLAYFULLY WHILE YOU ARE OUTSIDE OF IT.

YOU HAVE TO PRETEND THAT YOU ARE GAY FOR THIS RUSE TO WORK, BUT YOU DO NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO DO SO OUTSIDE, YOU KNOW?

IT SHOULD NOT BE LONG BEFORE IRA CAN LIVE ALONE WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT. BESIDES, I BELIEVE IT WAS MY BELOVED BROTHER HIMSELF WHO SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO ESCAPE THE SHRILL VOICES OF WOMEN AND DEVOTE HIMSELF SOLELY TO HIS STUDIES FOR A WHILE

OH, GOD...

GOD!


RATTLE

NOT AT ALL... YOUR SPEECH HAS MOVED ME.
PLEASE. LOOK AT THIS PAINTING.

I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND THOSE THINGS IN THE SLIGHTEST.

...AN ABSTRACT.

SHE HATED THIS PAINTING. SHE IMMEDIATELY GRABBED HER HEAD AND RAN AWAY THE FIRST TIME SHE SAW IT. CALLED IT "SCARY."

MY DAUGHTER CAME INTO MY STUDIO LATE LAST EVENING AND ASKED ME TO SHOW HER THIS PAINTING.

MIURA

..SHE FOCUSED ON IT, AS THOUGH SHE WERE FIGHTING WITH HERSELF.

BUT LAST NIGHT, SHE STOOD STIFFLY IN FRONT OF THIS PAINTING.

THIS PAINTING HAS BEEN TUCKED AWAY EVER SINCE. SUCH A LONG TIME.

THE NAME OF THIS PAINTING IS "DEPARTURE."

SO I TOLD HER.

OPPOSE! OPPOSE IT! STOP THIS MADNESS!

ISN'T THERE SOME OTHER WAY FOR US TO KEEP WATCH OVER HER?

BUT, DEAR!

WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL? WHAT ABOUT...?

WE ARE IN NO POSITION TO STOP IRA FROM TAKING THE NEXT STEP FORWARD.

REST. REST. BACK TO WALKING.

SIIIGH.

FLOMP

Market

WELCOME! WELCOME! COME ON IN!

WELCOME! WELCOME!

Bread

I HAVE TO BUY ORANGES, AND FLOWERS, AND DINNER FOR THIS EVENING, TOO.

MY WEDDING CEREMONY IS AT 3:00..

Market

wobble

WE'LL PROMISE TO LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER WITH A QUICK BOW

WE'LL CUT THE CAKE, TIE A RIBBON, AND EXCHANGE RINGS.

COKE

slowly..

THEN I'VE GOT TO MOVE RIGHT INTO PREPARING DINNER.

Grocery

WE'LL TALK AROUND
THE DINNER TABLE,
I'LL LISTEN TO HIS WORRIES,
AND SING HIM A LLuuABY.

IT'S ALRIGHT. YOU'RE A GOOD BOY.
I'LL ALWAYS BE HERE FOR YOU
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH
ONE PERSON LOVING ANOTHER.
NOW, FORGET ALL THOSE FOUL
THINGS PEOPLE HAVE SAID.

NOW TO JUST
STAND UP
STRAIGHT.

I PUT ON
MY BEST
OUTFIT.

WE CAN LIVE OUR LIVES
WITH ENCOURAGEMENT
FROM ONE ANOTHER,
MY DEAR HUSBAND

205

NHK

Hiha

UZZZZZ

[End of chapter 1]

Banana Bread Pudding

Ch.2

HotCakes Proudly Presents

Credits:

Translator: Kololo

Editor: Aneste & stubborn blob

ProofReader: Catriona

Typesetter: NightSwan

Scanner: White poem

QC: Synthoxide, Catriona

Ira chan, a pioneer fujoshi...

-NightSwan

HotCakes

-Remember the HotCakes Sabbath day,
to keep it holy.
3 days shalt thou wait before thou make unto
any forum, online reading site, IRC or
P2P host any image of HotCakes releases.

Shalt HotCakes find any image of the release
uploaded elsewhere before the
3 days hath past thou shalt be banished to
the purgatory of extended release delays and
releases may be made accessible to true
believers within our congregation only.

-Thou shalt not take the name of
HotCakes in vain nor
shalt thou remove any credits or inserts
from the HotCakes files.

Commandments

- Honour thy scanlation group.
Thou shalt not covet thy scanlation
group's links without offering
proper credit to HotCakes.

- Thou shalt not profit from the
HotCakes group's hard work.
And neither shalt we or any living
being upon Earth other than the highly
esteemed original creator
of any project we shine our light upon.

- Shalt it so happen that any licensing
befalls a project Hotcakes is laboring
with any distribution shalt be banned
and links will be removed.

Notes Page
Ch-2

***[Page 62, panel 5]: Public bathhouses** are fairly common in Japan. They are usually separated by sex, (which has to be the case or else I'm sure Ira wouldn't go!)*

***[Page 62, panel 6]:** The **'wash basin'** has to do with the Japanese way of bathing. It is used to rinse yourself off before entering the bathtub.*

***[Page 66, last panel]:** Ah, yes. The ol' wear-your-own-name-on-your-shirt. Hehe.*

***[Page 67, last panel]: Sadogashima** is an island in the Niigata prefecture of Japan. Since Ougami uses this name to refer to his lover (that later is revealed as Niigata) it is possible that Ougami did so in order to discreetly hint at the name of his lover, while not wanting to say the real name.*

[Pages 69-70]: andoragaton men ara teos gesutai karepon"!! The translation following the text is literal and really accurate, "Hard it is, on the one hand, a good man truly to become".
Currently, the main focus of the subject in study is the "Simonides' Agon" which is a Pivotal Discourse in Plato's Protagoras. The Protagoras was part of the Socratic dialogues between Socrates and another wiser participant which involve moral and philosophical dilemmas that are never resolved, as indicative of real-life.

Many thanks to Anax and eni!

For more info on the Greek, visit: http://mangahelpers.com/forums/showthread.php?p=1507505#post1507505

Part 2: Linus's Blanket

YOUR FATHER HAS APPROVED OF THE MARRIAGE!

PHEW, I MADE IT!

I JUST GOT HERE, SAEKO-CHAN!

I'M DIZZY

AW!

BUSY, BUSY, BUSY!

THE CEREMONY MUST BE OVER BY NOW!

I BOUGHT SOME RINGS. THEY'RE JUST PLASTIC ONES, THOUGH.

..I'M GLAD...

IT'S NICE HOW THEY SUIT THE SEASON, DON'T YOU THINK? NOW THEN, STAND NEXT TO EACH OTHER! C'MON!

AAH! WHAT PRETTY BEADS!

DO YOU, OCHAYA TOUGE, PROMISE TO ACT AS MIURA IRA'S HUSBAND TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD, WHILE STRICTLY REMAINING FRIENDS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS?

YES. SOMEHOW

SOMEHOW?

ABSO-LUTELY

DO YOU, OCHAYA TOUGE, SWEAR TO VIGOROUSLY UPHOLD THE ROLE OF FRIEND AND SUPPORTER TO YOUR WIFE?

YES.

I'LL TRY.

PLEASE ANSWER WITH A SIMPLE 'YES' OR 'NO.'

NOW THEN, MIURA IRA.

YES!

YOU MAY NOW EXCHANGE RINGS.

AND DO YOU SWEAR YOUR UNWAVERING SUPPORT TO HIM AS A FRIEND?

YES!

DO YOU SWEAR TO CARRY OUT THE IMPORTANT TASK OF H DING YOUR FR.END-TURNED-HUSBAND'S GAY STATUS TO THE OLTSIDE WORLD?

THIS CONCLUDES THE WEDDING CEREMONY.

THERE WILL BE NO KISS.

T/N: Please take care of me from now on.

YORO-SHIKU.

LIKEWISE.

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF ME FROM NOW ON DOORS, TABLES, CURTAINS, AND KITCHEN

YOU TOO WINDOWS, BOOKCASE, LIGHTS AND DESK

I GUESS WE'RE SISTERS-IN-LAW NOW.

Kyaaaa!

Me too! I'll eat anything but ground meat.

Bro is easy to cook for since he'll eat anything!

chatter chatter

SHOULDN'T WE DO THAT AFTER DINNER IS FINISHED? I'LL HELP!

AH, THAT'S RIGHT! WHAT ABOUT THE CAKE-CUTTING CEREMONY?

THANK YOU! LEAVE ALL THE HOUSE-WORK TO ME.

IF YOU FORGOT ANYTHING, FEEL FREE TO USE MINE!

YES! I SURE DID!

DID YOU BRING A PILLOW?

TIME OUT, SAEKO-CHAN!

OH YEAH! THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S CLOSE BY, HUH!

I'LL DROP BY MY HOUSE AND GRAB ONE!

WON'T YOU NEED A COAT ONCE IT GETS COLD?!

THIS IS SO GREAT!

WE CAN SLEEP TOGETHER! IT'S LIKE A VACATION!

THAT'S RIGHT! AND I ALSO HAVE TO EXPLAIN THAT THIS MARRIAGE IS FOR BOTH OF YOUR SAKES!

EH?

I'M SORRY, DEAR

I FORGOT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING! I SHOULD'VE INVITED YOUR BOYFRIEND TO THE WEDDING CEREMONY.

YOU GO AHEAD AND COOK, IRA. I'LL RUN AND GET HIM.

S. S.. SAEKOOOO?

YOU'RE ALWAYS SO HELPFUL, SAEKO-CHAN.

WHA!

I'LL CALL HIM OVER.

IT'S FINE! DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT! I'LL EXPLAIN THAT TO HIM MYSELF.

Ah ha ha

IF HE HEARS IT STRAIGHT FROM YOU, HE'LL WORRY THAT YOU'RE LYING! I HAVE TO TELL HIM PERSONALLY, AS WELL.

OUGAMI-KUN FROM THE SOCCER CLUB! I'LL EXPLAIN THE SITUATION AND HAVE HIM COME OVER. HE'S THE REAL THING SO I'M SURE HE'LL MAKE AN IMPACT! YOU BE SURE TO ACT THE PART OF THE BOYFRIEND TOO, BRO!

WHO.. DO YOU PLAN ON BRINGING OVER? WHAT'S GOING ON?

WH...

THANK YOU! I'LL MAKE ENOUGH FOOD FOR FOUR.

I'M THE INTERMEDIARY, AFTER ALL.

LOOK FORWARD TO !!!IT!

click click TUTU TUTU click click

to Saeko

like

my whole...

somehow I've given

CLATTER

HE WAS JUST ABOUT TO GO TO HIS BOYFRIEND'S PLACE, BUT I GOT HIM TO COME HERE INSTEAD. I EXPLAINED EVERYTHING. ALRIGHT, GO AHEAD

THIS IS OUGAMI DAICHI-KUN!

direct

COACH!

IT'S KICK-OFF TIME!

I DON'T LIKE YOU CAMOUFLAGING YOUR TRUE SELF, BUT IF THAT'S WHAT YOU REALLY WANT, I'LL FOLLOW ALONG

HOWEVER, I'M NOT CHANGING MY OPINION THAT BEING ABLE TO HOLD EACH OTHER OUT IN THE OPEN IS OUR RIGHT AS HUMAN BEINGS.

...T-THAT'S RIGHT.

I HEARD WHAT HAPPENED! I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT I WAS SURPRISED WHEN I HEARD THAT YOU'D GOTTEN MARRIED, BUT THIS IS A WAY FOR YOU TO CAMOUFLAGE YOURSELF FROM THE WORLD, IS THAT RIGHT?

YIKES. HE SURE CAN ACT

AH! AH HA HA!

YUP! HIDING YOUR DISCOMFORT WITH A LAUGH IS THE ONLY THING ONE CAN DO IN BRO'S SITUATION

I DON'T THINK TOUGE IS THE KIND OF PERSON WHO CAN CONTINUE TO CAMOUFLAGE HIS LIFE-STYLE HIS WHOLE LIFE EITHER, DAICHI-SAN.

I, TOO, BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE SHOULD BE ABLE TO LIVE THEIR LIVES WITHOUT HAVING TO APOLOGIZE FOR IT.

UNTIL THEN, I WANT YOU GUYS TO BE ABLE TO COME HERE AND DO AS YOU PLEASE, DAICHI-SAN AND TOUGE-SAN. I WILL ACT AS YOUR CURTAIN.

SO WHEN THAT DAY COMES, PLEASE BE SURE TO TELL ME.

AFTER ALL, WHEN THAT DAY COMES, I WON'T BE NEEDED ANYMORE.

AS SUCH, WHEN THE DAY COMES THAT TOUGE CAN FACE THE WORLD OPENLY BY YOUR SIDE, I WILL LEAVE THIS PLACE.

I WILL SEARCH FOR ANOTHER GAY MAN WHO NEEDS MY HELP AND COOPERATION.

THE FACT THAT WE WENT THROUGH WITH THIS MARRIAGE MAKES ME THINK ALL THE MORE THAT I WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO

THOUGH THIS ARRANGEMENT WAS SPUR OF THE MOMENT I KNOW IT ISN'T THE WRONG CHOICE

I SEE ALL I HAVE TO DO IS FEEL THINGS OUT FOR A WHILE AND THEN CLAIM I'M READY TO GO OUT ON MY OWN AFTER THAT IT'S BACK TO GOOD OL BACHELORHOOD

WONDERFUL! I'M IRA. WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US FOR DINNER?

YOU'VE . WON ME OVER .

BUT EVEN THOUGH I THINK IT'S RIGHT

I WASN'T SURE THIS WOULD WORK OUT AT FIRST, BUT YOU SEEM TO BE COMPLETELY AT EASE NOW

IT'S DELI-CIOUS!

WELL THEN, OUGAMI, HELP YOURSELF!

AAH I GET T

I GUESS I'LL GAZE AT HIM AS I EAT

JUST PRETEND THERE'S A GIRL YOU LIKE SITTING IN FRONT OF YOU! IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT.

WELL, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

IRA-CHAN IS LOOKING AT YOU SUSPICIOUSLY, BRO. YOU'RE NOT ACTING LOVEY-DOVEY ENOUGH.

STARE

munch

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME MORE TEA?

stare

munch munch

stare

NOW TO GIVE HIM A SIDELONG GLANCE

I THINK I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE.

SHALL WE HANG BACK IN ANOTHER ROOM AND LEAVE THESE TWO ALONE?

I THINK WE SHOULD GO WITH ONE THAT'LL SET THE RIGHT MOOD

LET'S PUT A RECORD ON.

YEAH, LET'S.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW ?

SLAM

OH, REALLY? YOU'RE LEAVING? YOU REALLY SAY .. I MEAN, I HAD A GREAT TIME TONIGHT. COME OVER AGAIN SOMETIME.

I'M SAVED!

SLAM

flap flap

flap flap flap

AH! SPEAKING OF TESTS, I WON'T BE ABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL FROM NOW ON.

IF HE WANTED TO TEST HIS READINESS TOMORROW, I WOULDN'T STOP HIM.

CLINK

カチャ

YEAH, YOUR DAD SAID NOT TO WORRY BECAUSE HE'LL GO THROUGH THE PROCESS OF SUSPENDING YOUR CLASSES.

DRAG

ROLL

ROLL

ROLL

DRAG

ROLL

ROLL

T/N: On book-Alphabetical Phone Directory

YES, I'M HERE. I'M WAITING RIGHT HERE!

AH! IT'S ME! IT'S ME. SOMETHING IMPORTANT CAME UP TONIGHT AND THAT'S WHY I COULDN'T MAKE IT OVER.

I DON'T HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL ANYMORE! IT'S LIKE A DREAM!

REALLY ..

REALLY ..?!

BUT IF I DON'T GO I WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE OUGAMI-KUN

I DON'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL EITHER

HUH? IT'S HIS JACKET.

HEE-EEY!

OH WHAT A RELIEF! HE'S STANDING RIGHT THERE

I HAVE TO BRING HIM SOMETHING HE FORGOT HERE!

AH.. TOUGE-SAN!

Oh Sigh Parking

HE'S PROBABLY AROUND THE TRAIN STATION STILL I CAN'T LET HIM LEAVE WITHOUT HIS JACKET AFTER PLAYING ALONG WITH ME AND BEING FORCED TO STAY OUT LATE

THE TRICK IS TO TREAT HIM LIKE A WOMAN

AH-OH SHE FOLLOWED ME I'LL HAVE TO KEEP ACTING

achoooo

thud thud thud

OH...

YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO HOLDS A STAKE IN YOUR BODY. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

I COULDN'T LIVE WITH MYSELF IF YOU CAUGHT A COLD BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T HAVE A JACKET IN THIS WINTER WEATHER.

THANKS.

THAT MIGHT'VE BEEN A BIT TOO STEREOTYPICAL

I'M DOING GREAT TOO SAY SO MOSE

YOU'LL COME OVER AGAIN, RIGHT? I WOULD'VE HAD YOU STAY THE NIGHT IF IT WASN'T FOR YOUR TEST TOMORROW.

注意一秒けが一生

YOU MADE IT, HUH?

YUP, I GOT HERE ON TIME!

rumble...

HEY.

OH. THAT WENT GREAT

I'LL BE BACK. NOW THEN, BE SEEING YOU!

On Sign: Paying attention only takes a second. Injury lasts a lifetime [T/N: Safety first-type sign.]

YOU'VE TAKEN A STEP FORWARD.

AH...?! N... NO! I JUST TURNED AROUND TO HEAD BACK HOME, AND THERE YOU WERE.

DID YOU KNOW I WAS WATCHING YOU THIS WHOLE TIME?

UM...

EH?

I'M SAYING THAT YOU TOOK A STEP FORWARD!

TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, YOU DIDN'T FEEL GUILT TOWARDS THE WORLD AROUND YOU.

YOU WERE ABLE TO ACT LOVINGLY TOWARDS HIM WITHOUT USING ME AS A CURTAIN!

SURE.

I'LL BE WATCHING YOU UNDER COVER, OF COURSE. IF YOU EVER FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE, JUST GIVE ME A SIGN AND I'LL COME RUNNING.

I SEE. IT WON'T BE LONG UNTIL YOU'RE COMPLETELY CURED.

IF YOU CAN GO ALL THE WAY AND, SAY, KISS YOUR BOYFRIEND IN THE PARK, YOU WON'T NEED TO BE CAMOUFLAGED ANYMORE!

YOU WERE ABLE TO DO SO JUST NOW WITHOUT EVEN REALIZING IT, SO I'M SURE THE DAY WHERE YOU CAN LOVE EACH OTHER OPENLY IS CLOSE!

THAT'S RIGHT! IF I WERE TO GIVE YOU A TEST TOMORROW, IT WOULD BE FOR YOU TO ACT LOVINGLY TOWARDS YOUR BOYFRIEND IN A PLACE WITH LOTS OF PEOPLE!

*see notes page

JUST SOME SOAP AND A TOWEL. I'LL HAVE TO BORROW SAEKO-CHAN'S WASH BASIN.

I LIKE IRA A LOT I HAVE SINCE THE FIRST TIME I MET HER. HOWEVER, I'M OPPOSED TO MAINTAINING OUR RELATIONSHIP UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES

WELL THEN, LET'S GO HOME AND THEN HEAD TO THE BATHHOUSE DID YOU BRING EVERYTHING YOU NEED?

ALRIGHT! I'LL RACE YOU TO THE APARTMENT

KYAAA! YOU KNOW I CAN'T WIN!

I WANT TO BE WITH HER LIKE I WOULD ANY OTHER GIRL

LOOKS LIKE I'LL HAVE TO FAKE A KISS TOMORROW

MAYBE I'LL GIVE IT A TRY!

MAYBE I CAN FREE MYSELF FASTER THAN I EVER IMAGINED!

THAT'S RIGHT, YOU REALLY SHOULD TRY! TOMORROW, IN THE PARK!

SURE.

GRRRRR! I'VE GOT TO BE BRAVE!

YOU CAN BORROW MY SOAP, WASH BASIN ANDWHATEVER ELSE YOU NEED. I'M NOT WASHING OFF TODAY.

I FEEL LIKE IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER I'M DIRTY OR CLEAN.

I'M HEART-BROKEN

I'LL WASH YOU OFF, SAEKO-CHAN.

IDIOT! FOOL! YOU FELL FOR IT.

KYAAAA!

YOU'LL REALLY KEEP YOUR PROMISE?

KYAAA-AAA!

KYAAA! A MAN-EATING MONSTER!

AH IT'S THAT MAN-EATING MONSTER I ALWAYS SEE IN MY DREAMS

HURRY OVER THIS WAY. I HAVE SOME FLOWERS FOR YOU.

ARE YOU A MAN OR A WOMAN?!

SITS UP ガバッ

ARE YOU A MAN OR A WOMAN?

DOES IT REALLY MATTER EITHER WAY? I'LL BRING YOU TO THE BATHROOM.

scribble
scribble

A DREAM

Daily Schedule

DO YOU WANT TO SAY "CAN I PLEEEASE SLEEP IN YOUR BED?"

HUH...?! I MEAN, WHAT'S THE MATTER?

UM... COULD YOU STAND OUTSIDE THE DOOR AND SING A SONG UNTIL I COME OUT?

I NEED TO USE THE BATH-ROOM.

NOW, NOW! GO RIGHT AHEAD!

THAT'D BE FINE.

YES!

I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU WHILE YOU'RE STUDYING, BUT .. COULD YOU...

Existence and Nihility

How I wonder
What you are

twinkle
tw nkle
ittle star

THAT EVENING IRA SAW THE CONTINUATION OF HER DREAM A BRAVE YOUNG MAN STRUCK DOWN THE MAN-EATING MONSTER

twinkle
twinkle

IRA ASKED THE YOUNG MAN "PLEASE STAY HERE FOREVER." BUT THE YOUNG MAN ANSWERED SADLY "I CANNOT FOR I MUST NOT PASS INTO OBSCURITY"

SEE YOU LATER.

WHAT A SAD DREAM.

*see notes page

KNOCK
ゴンゴン
KNOCK
flick
flick
flick
ピヨ chirp
ピヨ chirp
chirp
AH, BRO!
wobble
wobble
COACH! ABOUT THAT .. I CAN'T. HE SAW US LAST NIGHT.
SORRY ABOUT LAST NIGHT. TO TELL THE TRUTH, I'D LIKE TO ASK SOMETHING OF YOU TODAY, TOO.
HEY!
WHO SAW US? SAW
MY. MY BOYFRIEND. HE SAW YOU TALKING TO ME LIKE WE WERE IN LOVE LAST NIGHT, COACH.
EH?
LOOK AT THIS! LOOK AT THESE WELTS!
HE BEAT YOU...?
IT WAS SADO-GASHIMA. HE BEAT ME ALL LAST NIGHT.
Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy

*see notes page

YOU.

HE WENT INTO A WILD RAGE AND TOLD ME THAT IF I DID IT AGAIN HE WOULDN'T LET ME LIVE NEXT TIME.

I EXPLAINED THE SITUATION TO HIM, BUT HE JUST TOOK IT AS AN EXCUSE.

WHO DOES THIS ASSHOLE THINK HE IS?! HOW DARE HE DO SUCH A THING WITHOUT EVEN ASKING FOR AN EXPLANATION!

HE MEANS IT! THIS ISN'T ABOUT SOMETHING AS TRIVIAL AS LOSING SOME HOT LOVE SCENES LIKE IN A NOVEL. I WAS UNCONSCIOUS UNTIL MORNING!

COACH!

THAT'S WHY I CAN'T GO ALONG WITH YOUR REQUESTS ANYMORE.

..MEAN IT..

SHALL I HAVE A WORD WITH THIS SADO GUY TO HELP CLEAR UP THE MISUNDERSTANDING?

I'M THE ONE WHO'S SORRY FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO HELP YOU, COACH.

therapy

..UNDERSTOOD.. I ASKED TOO MUCH OF YOU..

THAT'LL ONLY PROVOKE HIM! I MEAN, HE'S STUBBORN, NASTY, AND SHAMELESS TO BOOT. IT WOULD BE BEST IF WE JUST LET IT SLIDE.

I'LL JUST HAVE TO ASK AROUND THE COLLEGE. YOU'RE GOING TO BE LATE FOR CLASS.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT A REPLACEMENT...?

RIGHT. LATER ..

EVEN IF YOU ASK AROUND THE COLLEGE

DAMN...

YEAH. WELL, I'LL BE SKIPPING TRAINING TODAY.

IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT .?

SCRAPE

SCRAPE

WHO COULD YOU POSSIBLY FIND ?

HM. I DON'T LIKE THE WAY HE'S LOOKING AT ME

NO. THIS IS NO TIME TO THINK ABOUT THAT PARTNER PARTNER

TRULY, arathews.

A VIRTUOUS PERSON, andr'agathon. INDEED, men

*see notes page

QUICK
LAUGHTER

I WOULD LIKE YOU TO WRITE ABOUT THIS IN A FIVE PAGE REPORT. THIS CONCLUDES MY LECTURE.

WHY IS IT CONSIDERED A GOOD THING TO TIE ONE'S HAIR IN A BUNCH AND NOT PAY ATTENTION IN CLASS?

TO BECOME, *genesthai*. DIFFICULT, chalepon.

ANYWAY, HOW ABOUT IT?

IT'S A DIFFICULT TOPIC, HUH...

I WONDER IF HE WAS TALKING ABOUT ME?

WHAT DOES *genesthai chalepon* HAVE TO DO WITH TYING YOUR HAIR IN A BUNCH AND NOT PAYING ATTENTION IN CLASS?!

わいわい chatter chatter

WHAT'LL IT BE? IS THERE A PARTICULAR MOVIE YOU WANT TO SEE TODAY?

HOW ABOUT WHAT?

EH?!

AH, SORRY!

I'M SORRY! I'M REALLY SORRY! I CAN'T GO TODAY BECAUSE SOMETHING IMPORTANT HAS COME UP!

I WOULD SAY THAT THIS PARTICULAR PROFESSOR NEEDS TO PUT HIMSELF IN OUR SHOES FOR ONCE!

MAYBE. HE TURNS WHATEVER'S ON HIS MIND AT THE MOMENT INTO A LECTURE TOPIC, ANYWAY.

BUT IT'S FINE. BECAUSE IT'S YOU, OCHAYA. I FORGIVE YOU. WHEN CAN I TAKE A RAIN CHECK?

TOMOR-ROW.

TOMORROW, HUH? SOUNDS GOOD. DON'T FORGET!

I'M SOOO DEPRESS-ED NOW!

THAT'S T

EVEN A COMPLETE AMATEUR WILL DO

TH S 'S AN ACT

YES. THAT'S RIGHT I DON'T NECESSARILY HAVE TO LOOK FOR A REAL GAY MAN

柔道部

Judo Club

HEEEEY! AFTER-NOON, OCHA-YA!

ANYWAY THE CLIMAX WILL BE AT 5.00 THIS EVENING

GREAT! WONDERFUL! I CAN'T BELIEVE HE ACCEPTED SO WILLINGLY I WOULD LIFT HIM UP IN MY ARMS AND THANK HIM IF I COULD!

EVEN THOUGH IT'S ALL AN ACT THERE IS A MAKE-OUT SCENE

IS THAT ALL?!

NO PROBLEM!

Thank you.

Sure!

12 3 4 6 9

ヒーヒー wheeze

ヒーヒー wheeze

501 Ogami

knock knock

Zzz

COULD HE BE DEAD?!

Shin

SFX: quietly opens door

THE DOOR'S UNLOCKED AND HE'S NOT ANSWERING.

IT'S ME, OCHAYA! THE MANAGER!

CAPTA N!

Z Z Z Z Z Z

THUD THUD THUD

WHICH MEANS HE DIDN'T SLEEP AT ALL LAST NIGHT

I GUESS BEING UNCONSCIOUS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SLEEP

HE'S ASLEEP

SINCE HE'S SLEEPING IN HIS CLOTHES FROM THIS MORNING THAT MEANS HE MUST'VE GONE RIGHT HOME AND WENT TO BED WITHOUT EVEN EATING FIRST

quietly
そお

STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
カンカンカン

MILK
BREAD
CRO-
QUETTES
AND AN
APPLE

bread

EAT THIS
WHEN YOU
WAKE UP
OK ?

I M SO
GIRLY

しょ

MILK

そお

quietly

AND THERE'S
A LITTLE BIT
OF OPEN
SPACE IN
HIS BED

IT'D BE
A WASTE
TO GO HOME
NOW

LET'S REST TOGETHER FOR A WHILE

Zzz すぅ. Zzz

Zzz

AAAH! I'M SO HEART-BROKEN! I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE!

Coach!

H-HUH.. ? HE'S SLEEP-TALKING?

Coach.

Coach

DID HE SAY SOME-THING?

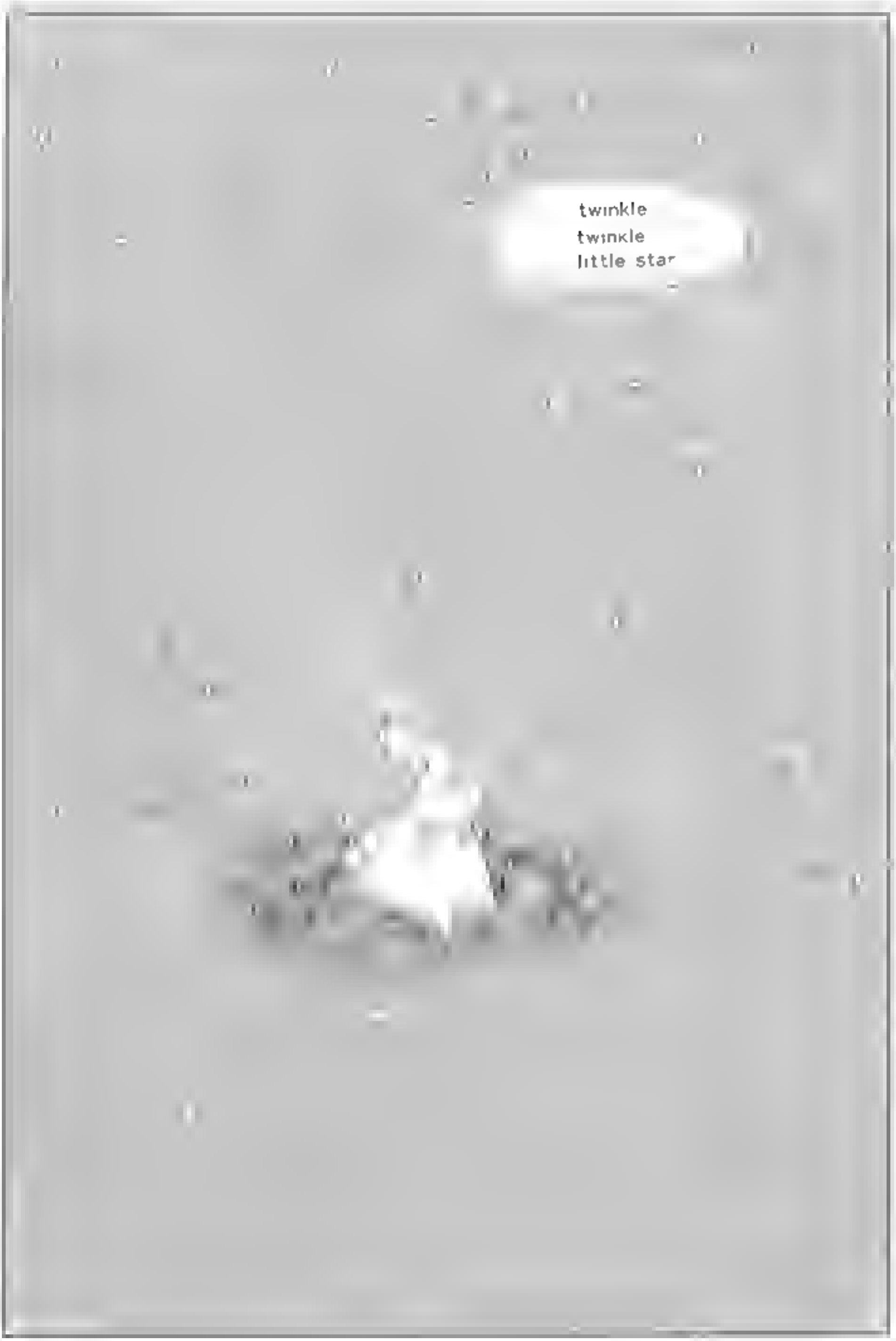
HUH?!

drip

W .. WH... WHAT?! EVEN THOUGH HE'S SLEEPING, HIS VOICE IS SO. .

HEART BEATING

HE S CRYING IN H S SLEEP


twinkle
twinkle
little star

PRer's Note: Ira's referring to herself in third person.

THIS STYLE WAS MEANT TO IMITATE CAT EARS!

LET'S DO THE NEXT ONE IN THE SHAPE OF IRA'S HAIR.

THE END RESULT DOESN'T LOOK ANYTHING LIKE EARS, THOUGH.

twinkle twinkle little star

IRA'S ALWAYS SINGING THE SAME SONG, Huh.

OH! LOOKS LIKE YOUR BRAID TURNED OUT QUITE NICE!

ALL DONE! OOOH, PERFECT!

NOW THEN, HOW SHOULD I DO THE NEXT ONE?

AH, THEY'RE HERE.

SORRY TO HAVE TO DO THIS, BUT JUST BE STILL UNTIL I SAY IT'S OK.

NOW THEN, SAZA-NAMI.

NO I CAN'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS. I JUST HAVE TO KEEP WATCH HE MIGHT LOVE THAT MAN, AFTER ALL

PERFECT

OI, I THINK I'M DRUNK. WHICH MEANS I'M READY NOW!

AL-RIGHT!

Slide

HERE I COME

THAT'S NOT THE MAN FROM LAST NIGHT

Hiii-yaaaa!

LAND

NO, I MEAN... BRILLIANT! WHAT A LANDING!

I'M SORRY! WHEN I SAW YOU COMING AT ME, THAT TECHNIQUE JUST CAME OUT!

Y-YOU REALLY SCARED ME THERE. PEOPLE DON'T USUALLY FALL FROM THE SKY WHILE YOU'RE OUT FOR A WALK.

OH! PROFESSOR? AREN'T YOU PROFESSOR NIIGATA?

So-rryyy!

HUH? PROFESSOR?

Alathewe genesthai chalepon.

MY APOLOGIES!

BE CAREFUL ABOUT PRACTICING OUT HERE. YOU CAN'T BE SORRY ABOUT IT *AFTER* SOMEONE GETS HURT.

ドオタア" THUD!

WII-IFE?!

A... AND I SUPPOSE THIS MISCHIEVOUS LITTLE URCHIN WHO'S TRYING TO APPEAL TO MY GOOD WILL IS A FRIEND OF YOURS AS WELL?

SHE'S MY WIFE.

AAAH! SORRY! I DIDN'T BRAID THE GRASS WITH THE INTENT OF TRIPPING SOMEONE! I'M SO SORRY!

I'M SORRY.

MY APOLOGIES.

..TH.. THE PHILOSOPHY TOPIC LAST PERIOD WAS D-DESIGNED...

TO SHED LIGHT ON YOUR UTTERLY INCOMPREHENSIBLE ACTIONS, OCHAYA TOUGE!

GRUMBLE

I SEE..

NO, THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY.

SORRY THAT WAS SUCH A FAILURE. LET'S TRY IT AGAIN.

I'M SORRY. I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS... GO AHEAD.

NO THANKS. I WAS THINKING ABOUT SENDING YOU A SIGNAL ANYWAY. LET'S GO HOME.

EH?

IT WAS TOO SOON AFTER ALL. I STILL NEED TO USE YOU AS A CURTAIN. I SIMPLY CAN'T KISS ANOTHER MAN OUT IN THE OPEN.

I LOVE BOTH HIM AND THE MAN YOU MET YESTERDAY AT THE SAME TIME.

ALLOW ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MY BELOVED SAZANAMI SABUROU.

UM .. UH, I'M CERTAINLY NOT HAPPY THAT YOU FAILED YOU KNOW!

AH, I'M SORRY... I SHOULDN'T BE SMILING.

NICE TO MEET YOU, TOO. I HEARD ABOUT THE SITUATION.

NICE TO MEET YOU. I'M IRA.

IF IT'S FINE WITH YOU, THEN IT'S FINE, PERIOD.

YEAH. IS THAT SILLY OF ME?

TO THE SAME EXTENT?

OH, GOOD IDEA! COME ALONG WITH US, SAZANAMI!

SAY, SINCE THIS BOYFRIEND COULDN'T COME OVER ON THE DAY OF THE WEDDING, HOW ABOUT TONIGHT? WE CAN HAVE DINNER TOGETHER.

ALRIGHT!

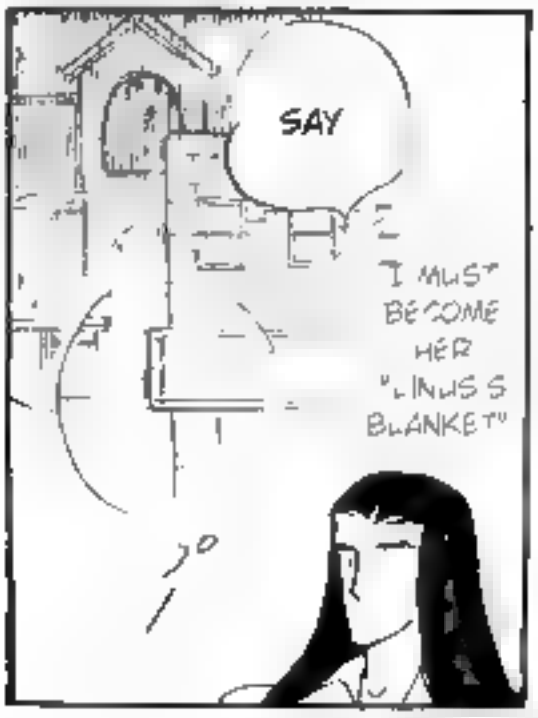
YAY! LET'S DO THAT, THEN!

I HAD FORGOTTEN THE FIRST WORDS MY SISTER WROTE TO ME. "PREVENT HER FROM FALLING OFF A CLIFF".

WHEN I SAW THE BRAIDED GRASS THAT THE PROFESSOR SLIPPED ON, IT CAME TO ME.

I'M NOT THE ONE WHO NEEDS A CURTAIN SHE'S THE ONE WHO NEEDS "LINUS'S BLANKET"

I WAS ACTING RASHLY THINKING ONLY ABOUT MYSELF



I MUST DEVOTE MYSELF TO BECOMING A GAY MAN WHO CAN'T BRING HIMSELF TO BE BRAVE

"I'M GOING TO POSTPONE THE KISS FOR A WHILE"

AS SOON AS I REALIZED THIS I THOUGHT TO MYSELF

T/N. Linus s blanket- Security blanket/blankee.

T/N: I assume she's implying that panhandlers don't have to bathe or cut their hair ..

DON'T PEOPLE USUALLY CUT THEIR HAIR WHEN THEIR HEART IS BROKEN?

WELL, ANYWAY! DON'T GIVE ME THE THIRD DEGREE!

OH, I KNOW! SINCE IT WAS TOO MUCH TROUBLE FOR YOU TO EVEN WASH YOURSELF AT THE BATH-HOUSE, YOU'RE GOING TO BECOME A EUROPEAN PANHANDLER, RIGHT, SAEKO-CHAN?

NO, NO, NO! I'LL BATHE. IN FACT, I'M GOING TO POLISH MYSELF UP AND MAKE MY BODY BEAUTIFUL!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BRAID MY HAIR TOO, SOMETIME?

WOW! I'D LOVE TO!

I'VE DECIDED TO GROW OUT MY HAIR, TOO!

AH!

HEY!

SAEKO-CHAN, WHEN DID YOU START WALKING BEHIND US?

HEY!

OI, SAEKO, WHAT'S WITH GROWING OUT YOUR HAIR? DID YOU FALL IN LOVE OR SOMETHING?

NO, I FELL OUT OF IT.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT SHE'S TALKING ABOUT.

[Chapter 2 end]

Banana Bread Pudding

Ch.3

HotCakes Proudly Presents

Credits:

Translator: Kololo

Editor: Synthoxide & stubborn blob

ProofReader: Catriona

Typesetter: NightSwan

QC: Catriona & Synthoxide

Scanned by White_poem

A twincest triangle?!

-NightSwan

HotCakes

-Remember the HotCakes Sabbath day,
to keep it holy.
3 days shalt thou wait before thou make unto
any forum, online reading site, IRC or
P2P host any image of HotCakes releases.

Shalt HotCakes find any image of the release
uploaded elsewhere before the
3 days hath past thou shalt be banished to
the purgatory of extended release delays and
releases may be made accessible to true
believers within our congregation only.

-Thou shalt not take the name of
HotCakes in vain nor
shalt thou remove any credits or inserts
from the HotCakes files.

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- Honour thy scanlation group.
Thou shalt not covet thy scanlation
group's links without offering
proper credit to HotCakes.

- Thou shalt not profit from the
HotCakes group's hard work.
And neither shalt we or any living
being upon Earth other than the highly
esteemed original creator
of any project we shine our light upon.

- Shalt it so happen that any licensing
befalls a project Hotcakes is laboring
with any distribution shalt be banned
and links will be removed.

Notes Page

Ch-3

[Page 104, panel 2]: *Tempura oil is used for deep frying. Also, Japanese bakeries will often bag up the cut-off ends of loaves of bread and sell them for a huge discount.*

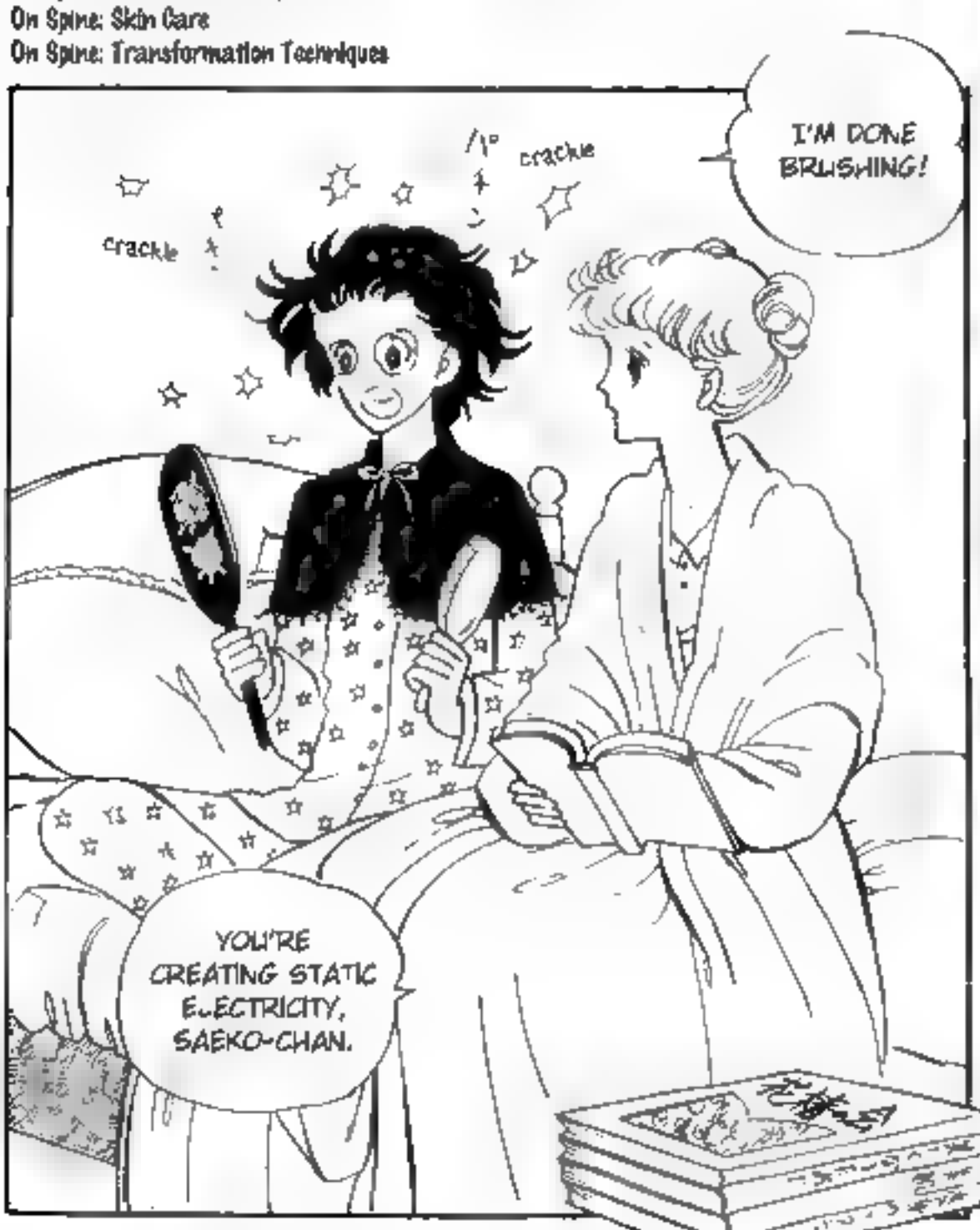
Swan: A guide for a perfect housewife?

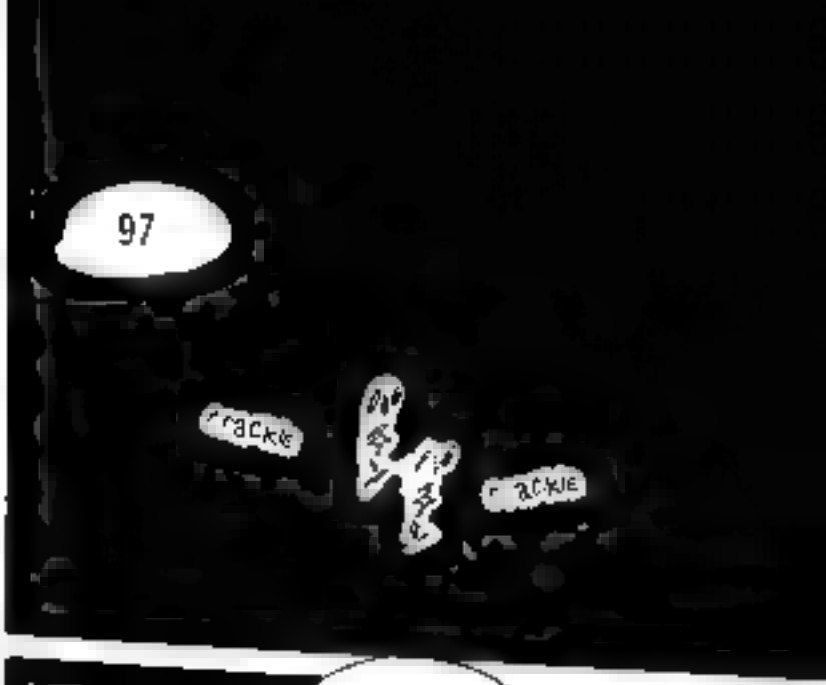
[Page 115, panel 6]: *"There he is! 2-**choume** is close by". **Choume** is a subdivision of Japanese addresses. With Japanese addresses, instead of naming streets, you have to whittle down areas into smaller and smaller ones until you get to the specific building. For example, from biggest to smallest, an address could go: City, ward (ku), choume, block, building.*

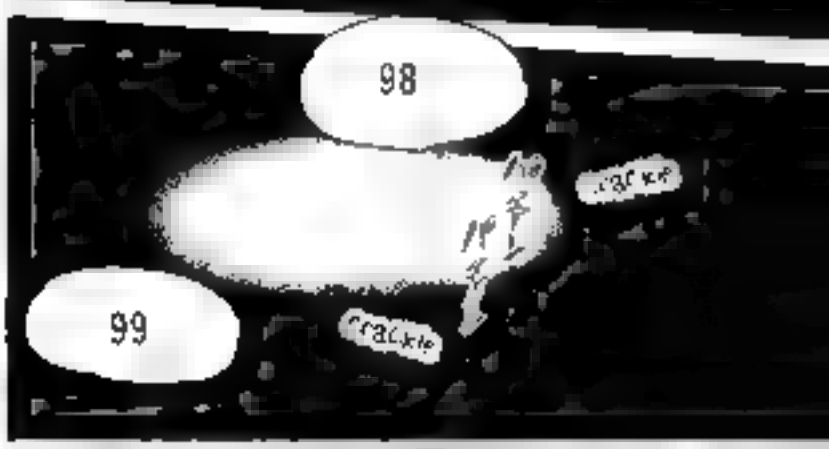
[Page 126]: *You would think that Ira is thinking/speaking this (i.e. my thread instead of her thread), but the sentence uses the male form 'ore,' so it couldn't be her.*

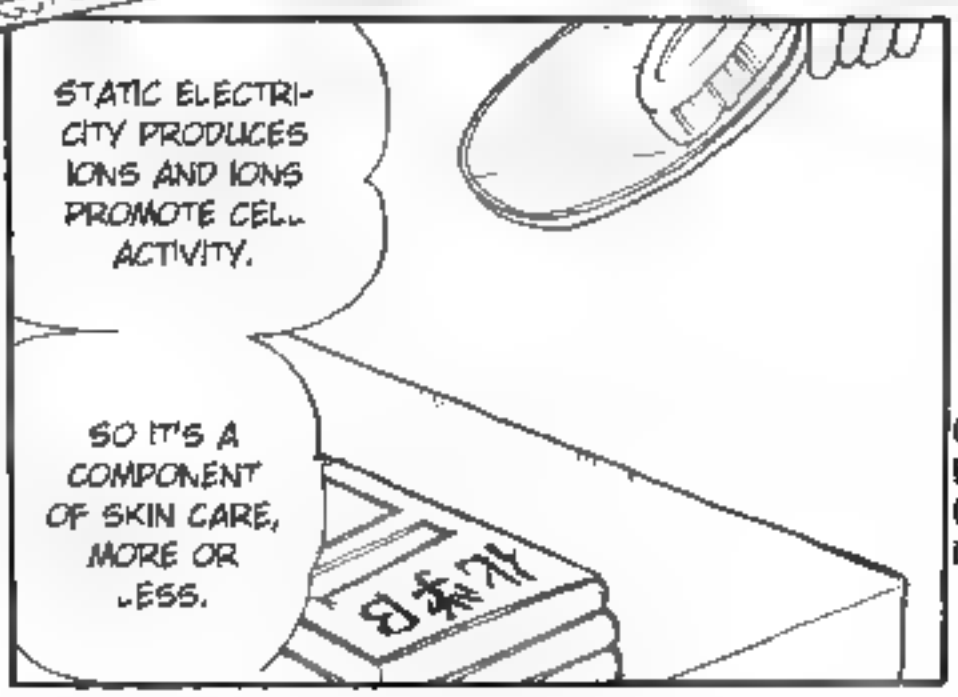
Part 3: Doppelganger?

On Book Cover: The Hanatsubaki Association (Hanatsubaki is a magazine put out by Shiseido, a high-end Japanese cosmetics company).
On Spine: To Attain Beauty
On Spine: Skin Care
On Spine: Transformation Techniques









On Book: Chemistry

..I WONDER IF YOU COUNT YOUR BREASTS AS MUSCLES..

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR!

CAN'T FORGET TO EXERCISE, EITHER

IS THAT ANOTHER COMPONENT OF SKIN CARE?

LEAVE IT TO ME!

I HAVE TO GET TALLER. I WOULD LIKE TO GET SOME MORE MUSCLE, TOO.

SAY, IRA-CHAN, STARTING TOMORROW MAKE SURE TO PUT A LOT OF SEAWEED AND CALCIUM INTO OUR MENU.

SAEKO-CHAN, SAEKO-CHAN!

FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT!

"I'LL GIVE YOU ALL OF THIS IRA THE CUTE CORSAGES NECKLACES. HAIR ORNAMENTS LIPSTICK BLUSH. "

I GOT IT FROM MY SISTER. WHEN SHE WENT TO GET MARRIED SHE TOLD ME THAT SHE'D GIVE ME ANYTHING I WANTED, AND WHEN I SAID LIPSTICK, SHE REPLIED ..

WOULD YOU LIKE TO PUT SOME MAKE-UP ON, TOO?! I THINK THAT'S ONE OF THE WAYS OF BECOMING MORE BEAUTIFUL

YOU HAVE A MAKE-UP KIT, IRA-CHAN?

W-WHAT'S GOING ON OVER THERE?

KYA-AAA-AA!

SLAM

OLDER SISTERS ARE THE ONES WHO HAVE STUFF LIKE THIS.

MY BRO SURE DOESN'T

OK!

PUT SOME ON WITH ME, IRA-CHAN!

SOUNDS FUN.

MAYBE I'LL GIVE IT A TRY PUT IT ON ALL NICE AND EVERY-THING

Aaaaah!

BRO

NO! DON'T LOOK AT ME! IRA-CHAN! LOOK AT IRA-CHAN!

AH!

T/N: On Top-Mid Book: Mechanical Dolls
On Low-Left Book: Lowering Your Rent (I like how a couple of the books are just called "Book." Haha).

ばたん SLAM

IRA-CHAN!

WAA-AAAH!

IRA-CHAN! THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO RUN AWAY!

NO, NO, NO!

IRA-CHAN.

flustered...

ISN'T IT, THOUGH?!

MAKE-UP ISN'T SOME-TH'NG THAT YOu SHOW TO OTHERS!

NO! SAEKO-CHAN! OH, SAEKO-CHAN!

IRA-CHAN... IT'S JUST. . YOU LOOKED SO STUNNING THAT I THOUGHT IT WAS A WASTE FOR NO ONE TO SEE YOU BUT MYSELF .. SO I WANTED TO SHOW MY BROTHER, TOO...

I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS SUCH A BIG DEAL TO YOU.

sob sob

sorry

sob sob

WEARING FLOWERS IN YOUR HAIR. PUTTING ON LIPSTICK AND APPLYING BLUSH ARE FAR MORE INDECENT THAN NUDITY.

I HATE MYSELF! I HATE MYSELF!

COME NOW, IT'S NOT LIKE HE SAW YOU NAKED.

NO! NO! NO!

SO I FEEL PERPLEXED WHEN I MEET PEOPLE IN THAT KIND OF MENTAL STATE.

I'VE ALWAYS DEALT WITH ADULTS,

I FIND MYSELF AT A LOSS FOR WORDS.

T/N: Kantou covers seven prefectures on the main island of Japan, including Tokyo.

Yeeeah! お

NOW THEN, MEN!

THIS YEAR I WANT TO CARRY THE TROPHY WE SO NARROWLY MISSED LAST YEAR TO OUR SCHOOL!

おー Yeeeah!

THE START OF THE KANTOU REGION'S HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER SEASON IS AT HAND!

STARTING TODAY, WE BEGIN OUR SPECIAL TRAINING!

お Yeeeah!

SEEING HOW OUR PLAYERS ARE THE CREAM OF THE CROP THIS YEAR, HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY LOSE NOW?!

おー Yeeeah!

To whistle...!

whistle to whistle

THUD THUD THUD THUD

ARE THOSE THE CHEER-LEADERS?

OOOH, I'M TOUCHED! WAIT HERE FOR A BIT! BREAK TIME IS COMING UP

Yeah!
おーおー
Yeah!
おーおー
Yeah!

YOU SAID THAT YOU GUYS WOULD BE COMING HOME LATE FROM NOW ON, RIGHT? I BROUGHT YOU SOME SNACKS

THEY SURE ARE! CHECK IT OUT!

ARE THEY TRAIN-ING?

OH, IRA-CHAN!

I FAILED AS A WIFE

ガラガラ
ガッタン
ガッタンタン
rattle
rattle
rattle

I'M VERY BUSY MANAGING, TOO! COME ON OVER ONCE THE BREAK STARTS.

YUP! THE SOCCER TOURNAMENT IS KIND OF LIKE OUR BIG WINTER FESTIVAL.

ガラガラ
ガッタン
ガラガラ
ガッタン
rattle
rattle
rattle
rattle

THE AFTEREFFECTS OF LAST NIGHT'S MAKE-UP DEBACLE STAYED WITH ME AND I COULDN'T LOOK TOUGE STRAIGHT IN THE FACE DURING BREAKFAST OR EVEN WHEN I SAW HIM OUT

ダダダン
ダダダン
ダダダダ
ダン！
top
top
toppity
top
top
toppity
top

MY ACTIONS THIS MORNING WERE UN-REFINED

WHAT'S WRONG, OUGAMI?!
whistle
AH! EXCUSE ME. IT'S NOTHING.
dizzy
whistle

Club Room

IT'S ALMOST BREAK TIME. I'VE BEEN ITCHING TO EAT THAT FOOD EVER SINCE I SAW IT.
WELL, SAEKO, I'M LEAVING HIM TO YOU. THERE'S NO POINT IN TRYING TO WAKE HIM UP.
WHENEVER I ASK HE SIMPLY SAYS THAT HE CAN'T GET ANY SLEEP. I'M AT A LOSS!
LACK OF SLEEP, IT SEEMS.
SAME AS YESTERDAY.
sad
zzz

LOOKS LIKE YOU TWO ARE ON GOOD TERMS AGAIN.

YOU COME TOO, SAEKO-CHAN. I'LL SAVE ENOUGH FOR OUGAMI-KUN AS WELL.

OK!

CAN'T SLEEP, HUH.. I FEEL LIKE I KNOW WHERE HE'S COMING FROM..

L ZZZ

GREAT! I'LL BRING IT OVER, THEN.

STOMACH GROWLING

SCARF

SCARF

THIS PROBLEM'S PRESENTED ITSELF SOONER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD...

YOU ARE SUCH A GOOD PERSON I'M TRYING WITH ALL MY MIGHT NOT TO THINK OF YOU AS A GOD

TOUGE-SAN. TOUGE-SAN

PR/N: Ira is referring to herself in third person.

I MEAN. EVERYONE WHO IRA HAS EVER THOUGHT THAT OF HAS LEFT HER SIDE

EVEN SARA

TOUGE-SAN

TOUGE-SAN

WHY DON'T I EVEN KNOW WHAT KIND OF BOOKS HE READS? IF ONLY I KNEW

NOT SLEEPING .. THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE READING A BOOK.

A DIFFICULT BOOK I'M SURE

COACH, WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

AAH, THOUGHTS ARE CROWDING MY HEAD AGAIN. THEY COMPLETELY AND THOROUGHLY DRIVE OUT MY WISH TO SLEEP

FROM THE DAY YOU HAD ME PUT ON THAT ACT, MY SLEEPING CONSCIOUSNESS HAS SUDDENLY AWOKEN

SINCE IT'S ALREADY MIDNIGHT, YOU MUST BE BOILING THE WATER AND DRINKING IT BY YOURSELF YOU TAKE A SIP OF THAT HOT, COARSE TEA, EXCLAIM HOW DELICIOUS IT IS, AND THEN LOOK AT THE CLOCK..

ARE YOU DRINKING TEA OR SOMETHING COACH?

THAT WAY, IF HE LET OUT AN EMOTIONAL SIGH, I COULD FEEL THOSE SAME EMOTIONS AT THE EXACT SAME TIME

IF I KNEW, I COULD READ THE SAME PAGES, AT THE SAME TIME

"BUT ANYWAY, OUGAMI HAS BEEN CARELESS LATELY .. WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON, I WONDER?" THEN YOU THINK TO YOURSELF THAT HE MUST BE AWAKE. NO DOUBT READING A MANGA OR SOMETHING. AND TOMORROW HE'LL CUT INTO OUR TRAINING TIME JUST LIKE HE DID TODAY

LOOK AT THE CLOCK AND SAY, "AAH, MIDNIGHT, HUH?" AND THEN YOU THINK, "BUT ANYWAY .."

IF THAT WERE THE CASE I COULD SEE THE COACH I COULD SEE THE COACH SOON. WAAAH'

IF THAT WERE THE CASE, I COULD SEE COACH.

YES. I SHOULD RUN OVER THERE AND CALL THAT NIGHT OWL'S BLUFF YES. I'LL DO THAT. COACH LEAVES HIS APARTMENT THEN HE RUNS OVER HERE AS FAST AS HE CAN.

HE'S COMING OVER.

SIT'S UP

ばん!

knock knock knock knock knock

カンカンカンカン

knock knock knock knock

カンカンカン

TAP TAP TAP

たたた

わなわなわな trembling

COACH! COULD IT REALLY BE!

flick

SO YOU WERE AWAKE. JUST AS I SUSPECTED. I CAME TO TELL YOU THAT IT'S LIGHTS OUT.

I... I. I... I.

NO EXCUSES! THINK OF THE TEAM! NOW THEN, I'M TURNING OFF THE LIGHTS.

HEY.

COACH., YOU REALLY.

squeak squeak

Uuu

Heart breaks.

D-don't cry. When you cry, my

sob sob sob sob

COA-CH!

GET SOME SLEEP!

WELL, GOOD NIGHT!

HAVE YOU CALMED DOWN?

YES. .

SNIFF

I CAME OVER BECAUSE I HAVEN'T SEEN OUGAMI IN A WHILE AND T-THAT FILTHY MAN WALKS IN HE EVEN TURNS OUT THE LIGHTS.

sob

NO MATTER HOW HARD HE TRIES TO GET GOOD GRADES. I'LL NEVER LET HIM GRADUATE

I'LL FAIL HIM. FLUNK HIM

WHAT TO DO? WHAT TO DO?

NOW THAT YOU'VE CALMED DOWN, GO TO BED. I'LL SING YOU A LULLABY UNTIL YOU FALL ASLEEP.

z

I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WOULD DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS FOR ME... COACH. .

I'D DO ANYTHING FOR YOU.

Hush a-bye, baby

OCHAYA TOUGE...

Hush a-bye

OCHAYA TOUGE...

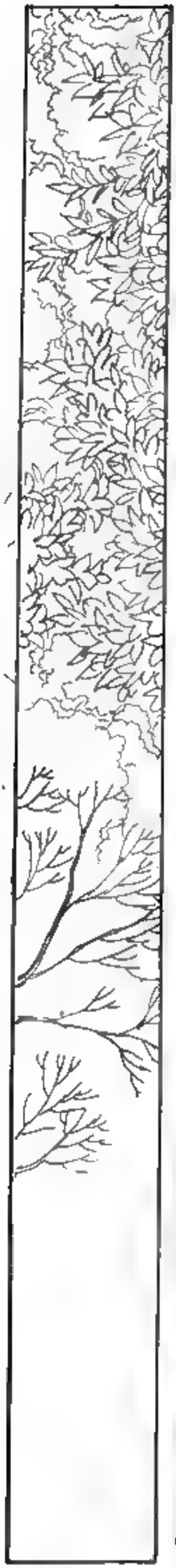
AAH, WHAT LENIENCY. AAH, WHAT FOOLISHNESS! THERE MUST BE A CRUELER AND MORE PERFECT PUNISHMENT. — OCHAYA TOUGE...

HUSH-A-BYE
NIGHTTIME ROADS
HUSH-A-BYE
MOONLIGHT
HUSH-A-BYE
WESTERN SKY

chirp

chirp

chirp



OK! WHAT TIME IS IT?!

SAEKO-CHAN!

OK!

SAEKO-CHAN!

IT'S 9 O'CLOCK! HURRY UP! TOUGE-SAN ALREADY WENT AHEAD AND LEFT.

KYAAA!

NO THANKS, I'LL PASS! I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO AN AFTERNOON SNACK, THOUGH!

YOU HAVE TO EAT BREAK-FAST, EVEN IF IT'LL MAKE YOU LATE!

K.O.

SEE YOU LATER.

*See notes page

THERE'S SO MUCH TO STUDY IN THE AFTERNOON. POLITICS, THE ECONOMY, TAXES, LOCAL CONTAMINANTS, HOME GARDENING, EMERGENCY HEALTHCARE, HOW TO MAKE TASTY TEA, CHEMICAL REACTIONS OF HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS, ET CETERA, ET CETERA!

I HAVE TO KNOW IT ALL. I HAVE TO MEMORIZE IT ALL!

FOR GOD'S SAKE

SQUEAK

SQUEAK

AFTERNOON SNACK, HUH...? I KNOW! THERE'S STILL SOME TEMPURA OIL LEFT OVER FROM LAST NIGHT, SO I'LL GO BUY LOAF ENDS AND MAKE SOME SWEET AND SALTY BISCUITS.

THAT WOULD BE ECONOMICAL. BUT I SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT NUTRITIONAL BALANCE AS WELL.

AH!

I TAKE IT BACK! I TAKE BACK WHAT I SAID!

OH NO! I PROMISED MYSELF I WOULDN'T THINK OF HIM AS A GOD!

SFX: THUD

BRO!

breathing heavily

SFX: ドドドドド

HMMM? THEY'RE LEAVING TOGETHER

SAEKO! COME WITH ME!

EVERY-ONE, KEEP RUNNING LAPS.

BRO!

I ASKED OUGAMI'S CLASSMATES AND THEY SAID HE DIDN'T COME IN TODAY.

SFX: ギロ stare

SLAM !!

501 Ougami

On Sign:
501 Ougami

IT'S THE SAME AS THAT OTHER MORNING. HE'S COVERED IN WELTS.

I'M SORRY ..

THE REASON THIS EVEN HAPPENED TO YOU WAS BECAUSE I ASKED YOU TO PLAY ALONG IN ORDER TO MAKE ME LOOK GAY. I HAVE TO HAVE A TALK WITH THAT SADO GUY TODAY, AT ALL COSTS.

I WAS INTER-RUPTED..

I FELT LIKE I COULD'VE STAYED SOUND ASLEEP ALL NIGHT.. BUT THEN..

I'M SORRY. PLEASE LET ME REST FOR A WHILE LONGER.

MY COLLEGE PROFES-SOR...?!

NIIGATA?! YOU MEAN..

IT SLIPPED OUT.

AH!

BESIDES, I DON'T REALLY..

I TOLD YOU, YOU CAN'T! PROFESSOR NIIGATA KENICHI WON'T BELIEVE A WORD YOU SAY.

THAT'S RIGHT. HE DOESN'T WANT HIS GAY LIFESTYLE EXPOSED TO THE PUBLIC, THOUGH. SO PLEASE, PRETEND YOU DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING.

LET'S DO THAT.

WELL, LET'S HURRY BACK EVERYONE'S STILL RUNNING.

I'M SORRY, OUGAMI-KUN...

..

WELL, I THINK THAT'S THE ONLY THING YOU GUYS CAN DO FOR NOW.

IN OTHER WORDS, WE HAVE TO KEEP OUR RELATIONSHIP ENTIRELY WITHIN THE SOCCER CLUB.

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I PLAN ON DOING. SO ARE YOU SAYING SOMETHING HAPPENED TO CAUSE A MISUNDERSTANDING LAST NIGHT?

BUT STILL..

THE PROFESSOR WON'T GO INTO A RAGE ANYMORE IF YOU AND I STOP DOING THINGS LIKE HANGING OUT ALONE AND STANDING CLOSE TO EACH OTHER.

THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO. LET'S ALL JUST REST FOR TODAY AND WE'LL MAKE THE BEST WE CAN OF THIS SITUATION TOMORROW.

I'M NOT HAPPY WITH THIS. NOT HAPPY AT ALL.

LET'S PLAY THIS BACK ON VIDEO

WHAT WAS WITH THAT SORRY YOU SAID AT THE END THERE?

OH, THAT. I'M THE ONE WHO DRAGGED HIM INTO THIS MESS IN THE FIRST PLACE, IS AL..

ANGRY

I'm still not happy about the whole thing.

"THE REASON THIS EVEN HAPPENED TO YOU WAS BECAUSE I ASKED YOU TO PLAY ALONG IN ORDER TO MAKE ME LOOK GAY."

PLAY ALONG?

HE WAS ACTING?

IN OTHER WORDS TOUGE ONLY PRETENDED TO BE A GAY MAN TOO ASHAMED TO REVEAL HIS SECRET TO SOCIETY

AM I M SC
CONFUSED
SO WHY AM
I LIVING W TH
THE OCHAYAS?

W-H-Y?

THAT'S THE TEA POT I WAS ABOUT TO USE

AH... SORRY

IRA-CHAN.

IRA-CHAN, THAT'S VEGE-TABLE OIL, NOT DISH SOAP!

AH . WAIT!

On Bottle Vegetable Oil

YES, THAT'S RIGHT! YOU DON'T HAVE TO WASH IT!

AH... SO... YOU DON'T NEED ME TO WASH IT?

On Bottle veg-etable Oil

WHAT'S THE MATTER . ?

IT'S ALREADY CLEAN, SO IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE WASHED.

WHY DON'T I HAVE TO WASH IT? YOU'RE GOING TO USE IT, RIGHT?

WHY WOULD YOU USE IT WITHOUT WASHING IT? WHY?

On Con-tainer Tea

IRA-CHAN.

SARA IS ABOUT TO VISIT HOME TOO AND I'D LIKE TO SEE HER.

I'M GOING BACK TO MY PARENTS' HOUSE.

IRA-CHAN.. ARE YOU TIRED?

NO, I'M JUST A LITTLE CONFUSED.

IT'S ONLY 7:00. I'M SURE THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

.....

I WANT TO GO ALONE.

I'M GOING TOO!

ARE YOU HOMESICK? WHY DON'T I GO WITH YOU, THEN?

ヒュウウ

WIND BLOWING

YOUR FATHER WILL BE DRIVING YOU OVER, RIGHT? MAKE SURE TO CALL US IF YOU DECIDE TO STAY THE NIGHT.

OK.

SARA! SARA! SARA! SARA!
YOU MUST BE THERE!

OH!

AH HA HA!

YOU HAVE TO BE THERE

IT SAYS SHE'S GOING TO BE ON HER HONEYMOON LONGER THAN SHE HAD ORIGINALLY PLANNED. AND TO SAY HELLO TO IRA.

MY MY, HOW HASTY OF HER!

TRULY.

GOING TO A FORTUNE TELLER... SHE'S MORE OLD-FASHIONED THAN SHE LOOKS!

SHE WROTE THAT A FORTUNE TELLER IN SPAIN TOLD HER SHE'D HAVE A BABY GIRL.

DID YOU READ THIS PART? SHE FOUND SOME CUTE BABY GIRL CLOTHES IN PARIS AND WENT AHEAD AND BOUGHT THEM!

WHY COULDN'T SHE HAVE GROWN UP TO BE LIKE SARA?
THERE YOU GO AGAIN. COME ON, WE'VE GOT THIS NICE LETTER AND EVERYTHING...

SHE SEEMS TO BE ENJOYING HERSELF. I SPIED ON HER FROM NEARBY THIS MORNING.

Haah
Haah
Haah
Haah

Haah
Haah

Haah
Haah
Haah

wheeze
wheeze

SARA.
WHAT AM I TO TOUGE? WHAT IS TOUGE TO ME?

SARA
I WANT TO BE REINCARNATED AS YOUR BABY
SARA

THIS ALL HAPPENED BECAUSE I THOUGHT OF TOUGE AS A GOD
CRYING WON'T HELP ANYTHING

SARA S PART OF THE MARRIED WORLD AND MOTHER AND FATHER ARE IN A WORLD OF THEIR OWN

TIME HAS ALREADY DIVIDED ME FROM EVERYONE

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE

WHAT SHOULD I DO? I DON'T KNOW. I'M BACK TO BEING

I WONDER IF I CAN HURRY AND COME UP WITH A NEW IDEA. WHAT SHOULD IRA BE DOING RIGHT NOW?

sniffle

THE SAME OLD IRA.

Ah!

THAT'S IT!

THAT'S JUST WHAT I NEED!

*See notes page

CHI.

NIIGATA

K.

KEN... KEN...
I.

NII...
GA...
NIIGA...

TA.

N,
N.

N.
NI,
NII..

THERE HE IS!
2-CHOUME IS
CLOSE BY.

東
AZUMA

新湯

白井

NII-
GATA.

NIIGATA.
NIIGATA.

NII-
GATA.

NIIGATA
KENICHI.

FOUND
IT!

On Sign
Tamura

On Sign.
Oo [The
rest is
cut off]

On Sign
Azuma

On Sign
Shirai

On Sign
Niigata

YES, THAT'S RIGHT. I'M SORRY TO BARGE IN ON YOU LIKE THIS. YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE IN REGARDS TO OUGAMI-KUN.

A WOMAN?

A STU-DENT, MAYBE ..?

THERE'S A WOMAN HERE TO SEE YOU.

SIR.

YOU'RE OCHAYA'S...

YOU'RE... AH! THE GIRL FROM THE PARK!

bow

HMM-MMM?

WILL YOU BEL EVE HIM FROM NOW ON?

BUT AREN'T YOU BULLYING HIM BE-CAUSE YOU DON'T BELIEVE HIM?!

YEAH, HE WAS JUST USED IN SOME KIND OF PLAY, RIGHT? I ALREADY HEARD IT FROM HIM!

I PROMISE, I PROMISE!

PROMISE ME! PROMISE YOU WON'T GO ON ANOTHER VIO-LENT RAM-PAGE!

PLEASE DON'T SHOUT ABOUT WHAT I DO AND DO NOT BE..EVE.

My house-keeper is listening.

crunch
crunch

EVEN THOUGH YOU SAID HE WON'T BELIEVE ME

I HAVE TO TALK TO THE PROFESSOR AND TELL HIM MY SIDE OF THE STORY AT ALL COSTS!

LUCKILY I WAS ABLE TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE SINCE MY WIFE IS OVER AT HER PARENTS' PLACE AND MY SISTER'S STAYING WITH A FRIEND

BLINK

HUH?

tap tap tap tap tap

A DOPPEL-GANGER?

I CAN'T BE!

HIS FACE

HIS FACE HAS TO BE DIFFERENT

I'M RUNNING IN FRONT OF MYSELF!

HUH?!

turn

I SAID WAIT!

HEY, WAIT!

SHUT UP, BRO!

H..

dash

WHA..?

.. SAEKO?!

YES! IT WAS ME! I WENT TO OUGAMI'S PLACE LAST NIGHT! I'M THE ONE WHO CAUSED THE PROFES-SOR TO HAVE AN-OTHER MISUNDER-STAND.NG!

SO I'M GOING TO THE PROFESSOR'S PLACE IN ORDER TO REVEAL MYSELF! LET GO OF ME!

.....

DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT! IT'S STRANGE, ISN'T IT? DRESSING UP LIKE YOUR BROTHER. FEELING LIKE YOUR OWN BROTHER!

SAEKO..

...OUGAMI-KUN... LOVES YOU. SO MUCH SO THAT IT'S TOUCHING. OUGAMI-KUN WASN'T GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP BECAUSE HE STAYED UP ALL NIGHT THINKING OF YOU, BRO.

I WENT OVER THERE AND SANG HIM A LULLABY. I MEAN, IT'S SO TOUCHING. HIS LOVE IS SO TOUCHING AND I COULDN'T JUST LEAVE HIM LIKE THAT.

SAEKO..

JUST CALM DOWN.

..SAEKO. CALM DOWN.

YOU STOP SHAKING FIRST.

I WANT TO BE YOU, BRO.

SIGH

SAID YOU GOT YOUR HEART BROKEN, YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT HIM?

SO.. WHEN YOU...

YOU'RE THE ONE WHOSE LOVE S TOUCHING

I'M HOLDING MYSELF AND STARING DOWN MY OWN VISAGE IN THE EARLY HOURS OF A STRANGE EVENING BORDERING ON THE BIZARRE...

My Sister's Transformation

IS THERE SOMEONE
OUT THERE YANKING
ON A TANGLED THREAD
DRAGGING PEOPLE
TOWARDS THOSE THEY
DON'T MESH WITH NEVER
ALLOWING PEOPLE TO
STAND WHERE THEY
SHOULD?
455

Some brothers are here

WHEN THE SIBLINGS ARRIVED AT THE PROFESSOR'S PLACE TO EXPOSE THEIR LIES, THEY FOUND THAT IRA WAS ALREADY THERE

I WORKED HARD ON THAT LULLABY, SANG AS QUIETLY AS I COULD...

HUH? WHY DID YOU SAY YOU WERE VISITING YOUR PARENTS?

IRA-CHAN!

I WAS JUST ABOUT TO CALL YOU.

OH, SAEKO-CHAN, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DRESSED UP AS TOUGE...

WHICH MEANS ..

IRA-CHAN CAME TO DO THE SAME?!

SHE HEARD ABOUT THE ACT?!

LET ME GUESS. YOU TWO ARE HERE TO CLEAR UP THE MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT THAT LITTLE PLAY OF YOURS AS WELL?

SHE'LL BE LIVING WITH ME NOW.

LET ME SEE. I SUPPOSE THIS IS A LITTLE SOONER THAN YOU EXPECTED, OCHAYA TOUGE-KUN, BUT IRA-KUN IS BREAKING UP WITH YOU.

I SPOKE WITH THE PROFESSOR AND HE SAID THAT HE WANTS ME TO LIVE WITH HIM. I CAN BE OF REAL HELP THIS TIME, TOUGE-SAN, SO...

IRA-CHAN.

IRA-CHAN!

*See notes page

[End of chapter 3]

Banana Bread Pudding

Ch.4

HotCakes Proudly Presents

Credits:

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QCers: Catriona & Altilye

Saeko - master of disguise.

-NightSwan

HotCakes

-Remember the HotCakes Sabbath day,
to keep it holy.
3 days shalt thou wait before thou make unto
any forum, online reading site, IRC or
P2P host any image of HotCakes releases.

Shalt HotCakes find any image of the release
uploaded elsewhere before the
3 days hath past thou shalt be banished to
the purgatory of extended release delays and
releases may be made accessible to true
believers within our congregation only.

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esteemed original creator
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befalls a project Hotcakes is laboring
with any distribution shalt be banned
and links will be removed.

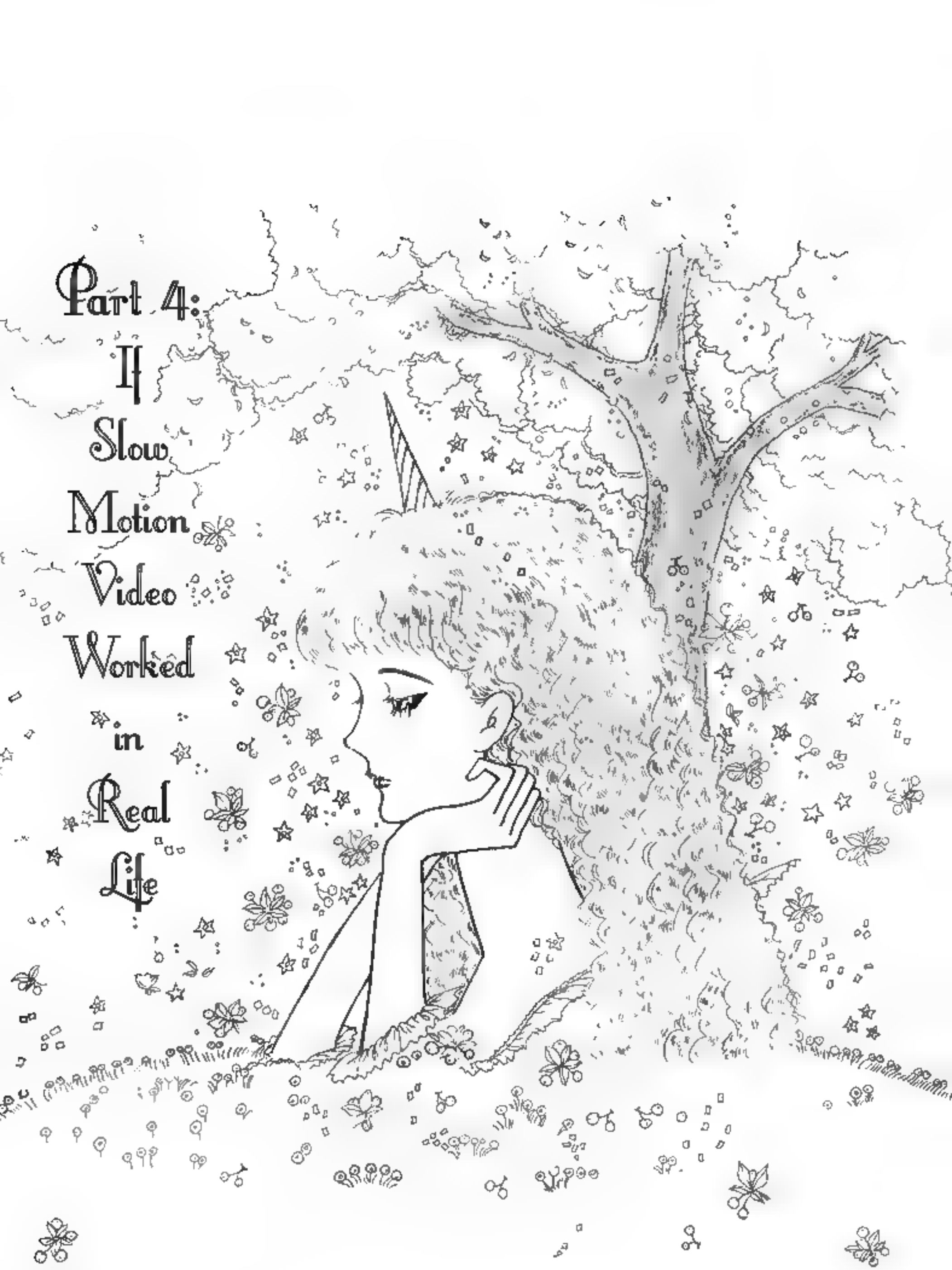
Notes Page
Ch-4

[Page 134, panel 11]: In the original, delicious is 'oishii' and miss is 'koishii.' They are only different by one letter, hence her linking them. Miss is meant in the sense of "I miss you" or "I miss home," by the way, and not the "I'm missing my keys" sense.

[Page 138, panel 3]: Many Japanese homes and apartments do not have ovens. Ovens are not often used in traditional Japanese-style cooking. They're probably becoming more and more common these days, but they're still far from being a staple in the kitchen.

[Page 138, panel 3]: Raegan/Regan was the possessed girl in The Exorcist (film).

Part 4: If Slow Motion Video Worked in Real Life



PACKING YOUR LUGGAGE ALL QUICK AND EFFICIENT.

IRA-CHAN, YOU'RE BEING SO SILENT. IT'S LIKE YOU'RE A ROBOT!

clap clap

grab

squeeze squeeze

HEY, SAY SOMETHING! YOU HAVEN'T BECOME A BURDEN AS YOU SAID, YOU KNOW!

I'LL BE TAKING MY LEAVE NOW

CLATTER

WELL THEN.

bow

BRO! GOOD BYE.

PLEASE SAY GOOD BYE.

SHE'D GO EVEN IF WE TRIED TO STOP HER.

BUT BRO! I DON'T THINK THAT IRA-CHAN GOING TO LIVE WITH PROFESSOR NIIGATA WILL BE GOOD FOR HER!

SAEKO.

IRA-CHAN!

BRO!

slam

I TOLD YOU NOT TO GET SO AGITATED

YOU'RE PRETTY QUICK TO GIVE UP. THOUGH IT WAS JUST A FORMALITY, SHE WAS YOUR WIFE FOR A WHILE!

IRA WILL PROBABLY TALK TO HER PARENTS HERSELF THEN THE PROFESSOR CAN ALSO TALK THEM DOWN WITH HIS EXPERT KNOWLEDGE, IN YOUR STEAD.

I'LL EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO HER PARENTS. I DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT IN MY ABILITY TO PERSUADE THEM TO ACCEPT THIS TURN OF EVENTS, THOUGH.

I FEEL RESPONSIBLE!

WELL, BRO, COME OVER HERE. WE NEED TO ALLOCATE JOBS.

AAH, I'VE HAD ENOUGH. IT'S ALL SO FRUITLESS. IS THIS HOW HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE?

IT'S NOT NECESSARILY TRUE THIS WILL END BADLY FOR HER.

EH?

SINCE IRA-CHAN WAS HERE ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS STAND GUARD AT NIGHT. LET'S SEE, YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES FROM NOW ON WILL BE...

YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH WORK GOES INTO THESE CHORES ONCE YOU HAVE TO DO THEM AGAIN, HUH.

YUP

I'LL MAKE DINNER, CLEAN ONCE A WEEK, AND DO MY PART OF THE LAUNDRY.

TO START WITH, YOU CAN PREPARE BREAKFAST, MAKE THE BEDS, AND DO YOUR OWN LAUNDRY

scribble scribble

WE'LL SWITCH WHO DOES THE SHOPPING EVERY WEEK. AND WHEN WE GO TO THE BATHHOUSE I WANT YOU TO WAIT FOR ME TO COME OUT

YOU'RE AWFULLY QUICK TO CHANGE MINDSETS.

AND WHEN I SAY I BECAME HEAVIER, I'M NOT REFERRING TO THE CHORES

I FELT AS THOUGH THE WEIGHT ON MY SHOULDERS SUDDENLY BECAME MUCH HEAVIER AFTER IRA LEFT

MUST BE THE WEIGHT OF MY PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

COME, COME. PLEASE, HAVE SOME TEA.

SHE'S FINE. SHE'LL RECOVER. SHE'S QUITE ALRIGHT.

SUCH A SELFISH DAUGHTER. S-SUCH A HOPELESS DAUGHTER!

HE LOCKED THE WINDOWS OF HIS RESIDENCE DOWN TIGHT, AND REFUSED TO TALK TO ANYBODY

IT WAS A FIRST-YEAR PHILOSOPHY STUDENT OF MINE WHO FELT RADICALLY LOST AS TO HIS PLACE IN SOCIETY.

I'VE HAD A CASE LIKE THIS BEFORE.

DIE?!

IN TIME HE BEGAN TO THINK THAT HIS ACTIONS HELD NO MEANING, AND THAT IT WOULD BE EASIER JUST TO DIE.

WE HELD A LONG DIALOGUE ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF "MEANING". A VERY LONG DIALOGUE, SPANNING DAYS AND MONTHS.

HOWEVER, HIS ROOM HAD NO BEAMS FROM WHICH TO HANG A ROPE, AND HIS GAS HAD ALREADY BEEN CUT OFF. UNABLE TO FIND A QUICK WAY TO DIE AND AS HE DRIFTED TOWARD THE RAILROAD TRACKS

HE CAME ACROSS ME.

THEY ARE MORE SIMILAR THAN YOU WOULD THINK.

BOTH OF THEIR ISSUES LIE IN THEIR PLACE IN SOCIETY

THANK YOU! THANK YOU SO MUCH!

IRA IS DIFFERENT, THOUGH. IRA IS NOT HESITATING. SHE IS TAKING ACTION.

HE RECOVERED. HE IS NOW IN HIS THIRD YEAR OF COLLEGE, AND HAS GARNERED A TRULY UNIQUE GRASP ON PHILOSOPHY. I EAGERLY AWAIT HIS GRADUATION THESIS.

I'LL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO HELP HER.

IT'S DECIDED
PREDESTINED

IRA'S ACTIONS
AND DEEDS.
COMPLETELY
KNOWN MOTHER
WILL CRY. FATHER
W..L LET OUT
A SIGH

THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL. IT WAS DELI-CIOUS.

ﾊﾅ ﾋﾗ ﾄﾝ

THAT'S RIGHT. WHEN THE FOOD IS DELICIOUS, YOU SHOULD SAY SO.

IT'S DISCOURAGING WHEN SOMEONE DOESN'T SAY YOUR FOOD IS DELICIOUS EVEN WHEN YOU KNOW IT IS, RIGHT?

THE PROFESSOR NEVER SAYS SUCH THINGS BECAUSE HE'S ALWAYS TOO BUSY THINKING ABOUT HIS STUDIES WHILE HE'S EATING.

OH MY, THANK YOU! HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE I WAS TOLD MY COOKING IS DELICIOUS?

AH I FEEL LIKE I DON'T HAVE ANY ANSWERS AGAIN

シ-ン

WHEN SOMETHING S O-E-ｳ-ﾏ-C-I-O-ｳ-S SAY SO

WHEN SOMETHING IS DELICIOUS. SAY SO

IT'S NOT THE SAME AS M-I-S-S BUT THE MIDDLE IS SIMILAR. MISS M-I-S-S.

DE-LIC-IOUS HM?

*See Notes Page

IF I TALK WHILE I EAT, AIR GETS SENT INTO MY STOMACH AND IT EXPANDS PAINFULLY. AS SUCH, I DON'T SPEAK DURING MEALS.

DURING THE MEAL YOU WERE SILENT

YEAH.

EH?

YOU DIDN'T TALK MUCH DURING THE MEAL.

Her too

NOT EVERYONE IS LIKE THAT. YOU PROBABLY DON'T HAVE THAT PROBLEM EITHER, PROFESSOR. AT THE END OF THE DAY, IT'S MOST LIKELY A PRODUCT OF MY IMAGINATION. IT'S HARDLY WORTH DISCUSSING.

MY, WHAT A RARE PHENOMENON. SHALL WE TALK ABOUT WHETHER THAT IS TRUE FOR EVERYONE OR NOT?

I'M GOING TO BED.

BUT YOU CAN CALL ME ANY TIME AND I'LL COME RUNNING

WE ARE A COUPLE BECAUSE YOU ARE "A GAY MAN WHO FEELS TOO ASHAMED TO REVEAL HIS SECRET TO SOCIETY". WE ARE ALREADY PERFECT UNDER THAT DEFINITION, PROFESSOR.

It's best attempt at a tender look

NO, IT'S NOT POINTLESS. TALKING IS NEVER POINTLESS. WE'RE A COUPLE OUT TO HELP EACH OTHER, SO I THINK THIS KIND OF DISCUSSION IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE.

SLAM

IF YOU EVER FEEL LIKE CRYING BECAUSE OF YOUR SITUATION, I WILL HOLD YOU LIKE A MOTHER.

grin

sigh

COHERENT?! WHAT ABOUT ME?! ARE YOU SAYING I'M GAY?!

I CAN'T HELP BUT SIDE WITH SOMEONE WHO TOLD ME MY FOOD WAS "DELICIOUS", YOU KNOW?

TO BE QUITE HONEST, I HAVE A WEAKNESS FOR COMPLIMENTS.

I'LL MAKE SOME TEA.

...SHE'S A REAL CHAL-LENGE.

REALLY? THE THINGS SHE SAYS SOUND PERFECTLY COHE-RENT TO ME.

...COFFEE.

I'LL MAKE HER RESPECT ME MORE AND MORE MAKE HER REVERE ME MORE. I'LL MAKE HER FORGET YOU COMPLETELY

IN OTHER WORDS, I NEVER BEFORE SAW OCHAYA TOUGE'S FACE LOOK THE WAY IT DID ON THE DAY THAT IRA ANNOUNCED SHE'D BE LIVING WITH ME

THIS IS THE CRUEL REVENGE I WAS HOPING FOR

THEN YOU WILL KNOW THE PAIN THAT I TASTED

YOU'VE REPEATED THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER, YOU IDIOT! YOU KNOW ALREADY!

THINK OF THE PROFESSOR! THE PROFESSOR!

TOUGE-SAN.

TOUGE-SAN LIED, AFTER ALL THIS IS THE ONLY THING I CAN DO

*See Notes Page

HOW DO YOU THINK IT WILL TASTE?

I SHOULD MAKE THAT BANANA BREAD PUDDING I'VE BEEN UNABLE TO HAVE UP UNTIL THIS POINT, AND SHARE IT WITH THE PROFESSOR

I SAW AN OVEN IN THE KITCHEN EARLIER.

THAT'S RIGHT

TASTE LIKE A DYING COUNTRY. TASTE LIKE A VIBRANT COUNTRY

TASTE ITALIAN TASTE FRENCH TASTE AMERICAN. TASTE LIKE HEAVEN TASTE LIKE HELL

A STRANGELY COMPLICATED TASTE A COMPLETE TASTE. AN INCOMPLETE TASTE

A MELT-IN-YOUR-MOUTH TASTE A NAUSEATING TASTE

A SWEET TASTE A BITTER TASTE

YES

I HOPE IT TASTES LIKE A VIBRANT COUNTRY

GO TO THE DESIGNATED SMOKING AREA, OCHAYA TOUGE.

YOU ARE AGITATED AND NOT REALLY OBSERVING ANYTHING, AS THOUGH YOU ARE EXPECTING A VISITOR.

YOU ARE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THIS LECTURE. YOU ARE LOOKING AT ME, BUT YOU ARE NOT LOOKING AT YOUR STUDIES.

HUH? HE'S NOT SMOKING.

NOW THIS GOES WITHOUT SAYING, BUT I WON'T TOLERATE SMOKING DURING CLASS.

YOU MUST LIGHT AND EXTINGUISH, LIGHT AND EXTINGUISH, TO PASS THE TIME.

WHAT YOU NEED NOW IS TOBACCO.

NOW, AS FOR THE REST OF YOU, IF YOU AREN'T GOING TO LISTEN TO THE LECTURE I ASK THAT YOU LEAVE BEFORE I MUST ORDER YOU TO DO SO. YOU HAVE MY PERMISSION.

EXCUSE ME.

IT'S TRUE THAT I WASN'T LISTENING TO THE LECTURE, SO THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO

I WOULD UNDERSTAND IF THE PROFESSOR KICKED YOU OUT FOR NODDING OFF, BUT THAT WASN'T THE CASE TODAY

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

HOW?

SHALL I COMFORT YOU?

I HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN ABLE TO SORT IT ALL OUT MYSELF.

TELL ME.

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?

TOO MANY THINGS.

DON'T YOU ASK ME "HOW"! AAAH! YOU REALLY PISS ME OFF!

YOU PROMISED ME! WE HAD A DATE! I'M SO PISSED!

WHAT'S WORSE, THIS WAS A SECOND DATE FROM WHEN YOU BLEW ME OFF THE FIRST TIME! I WANT TO BRING YOU DOWN TO SIZE EVEN MORE THAN THE PROFESSOR DID!

YOU YELLING AT ME ALLEVIATED THAT BAD AFTERTASTE I COULDN'T SHAKE OFF AFTER LEAVING THE LECTURE.

WHAT ARE YOU TALK-ING ABO-UT?!

THANK YOU.

WHAT?! WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK?

IT'S NO USE. YOU'RE A PLAYBOY DOWN TO YOUR VERY CORE.

On sign:
This Week's Menu
-Pulled Pork
Tea-boiled Chicken

今週のメニュ

IRA WAS WITH ME LAST NIGHT. WE WERE PERFECTLY FINE TOGETHER. NO NEED TO WORRY.

OCHAYA TOUGE-KUN.

HAS SMOKING HELPED YOU SORT OUT YOUR FEELINGS A LITTLE, PERHAPS?

GULP

WHO'S IRA?

WE WERE MARRIED

KICK-OFF!

THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL! THAT'S A VIOLATION OF YOUR CONTRACT! WHERE'S YOUR MOTTO OF NEVER GETTING MARRIED AND ENJOYING EVERYONE'S COMPANY?!

THAT'S ENOUGH ALLEVIATING ALREADY BESIDES, EVEN THOUGH I CALLED IT MARRIAGE, IT WASN'T REALLY... REALLY.

MAR-RIIIII-ED?!

THOUGH YOU CALLED IT MARRIAGE IT WASN'T REALLY WHAT?! WHEN?! WHEN DID YOU GET MARRIED?!

AH, SHOOT. I HAVE TO GO COACH THE SOCCER TEAM.

HEY HEY! YOU'RE TRYING TO RUN AWAY, AREN'T YOU?!

FINE! FINE BY ME! IF THAT'S HOW IT'S GOING TO BE THEN I'M GOING TO TELL THE WOMEN IN COMMERCIAL SCIENCES, THE WOMEN IN LITERATURE, LAW, MATH - EEEEEVERYBODY - WHAT THE HELL'S BEEN GOING ON!

SWISH

YAMADA! NO GRUM-BLING!

crash

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

light breeze

ON THE RIGHT! YOUR DEFENSE IS INADE-QUATE!

YAMADA!

WHAT'LL YOU DO DURING A MATCH?! CHEERLEADERS WILL BE LOOKING DOWN ON YOU THEN!

COACH, I CAN'T DO IT! NOT WITH THOSE FEMALE STUDENTS LOOKING DOWN ON US FROM THE HILL!

KYAAA!

KYAAA!

KYAAA!

KYAAA!

KYAAA!

KYAAAA! IT'S WINDY!

AS FOR ME

DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THE WIND'S GOING TO STOP ANYTIME SOON. NO MATTER HOW MUCH BRO SPURS THE GUYS ON. I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY WAY FOR HIM TO GET A HEATED GAME OUT OF THEM TODAY

KYAAA!
KYAAA!
KYAAA!
KYAAA!

THEN I'LL CHANGE WITH THE TRANSFORMATION KIT I BROUGHT AND SELF SHOT ASK OUT OUGAMI-KUN

I'LL WAIT FOR IT TO GET DARK AND FOR BRO TO LEAVE

KYAAA!
KYAAA!
KYAAA!
KYAAA!
KYAAA!

I CAN'T FORGET OUGAMI'S HAPPY FACE THE NIGHT I SUNG HIM THAT LULLABY

pat pat pat pat

OUGAMI.

THAT'D BE FINE.

AH I CAN'T TAKE THAT FACE

YEAH. I FEEL LIKE WANDERING AROUND. CARE TO JOIN ME?

COACH, YOU'RE STILL HERE?

IT WAS ROUGH OUT THERE TODAY. AT THAT MOMENT YOU WERE PROBABLY WISHING EVERYONE ON THE TEAM WAS GENUINELY GAY, HUH, COACH?

AH HAHA!

AH IF I GET TOO CLOSE I'LL BE FOUND OUT SO I SHOULD KEEP ABOUT THIS DISTANCE

NO!

I'M BRO I HAVE TO BE BRO

I DOUBT IT.

HMMM

WAS THE GIRL YOU REALLY ADORE AMONG THOSE FEMALE STUDENTS UP THERE, I WONDER?

WH... WHAT DOES HE THINK? HE MUST THINK MORE OF HER THAN I DO BUT I CAN'T SAY ANYTHING IRRESPONSIBLE

WH...

OH YEAH. EVEN THOUGH IRA-SAN WENT OFF TO LIVE WITH THE PROFESSOR, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF HER, COACH?

SETTLE
HUH

MY DESIRES ARE TWISTED AS WELL.

T-THAT'S NOT CLEAR EVEN TO MYSELF.

THAT'S RIGHT. SETTLE.

WELL, I'M SURE THINGS WILL SETTLE ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE PROFESSOR, BUT MY FEELINGS TOWARD YOU KEEP GROWING, COACH.

OH WHAT A HANDSOME DIGNIFIED MOUTH

DOES BRO REALLY NOT FEEL A NEED TO KISS THOSE LIPS WHEN HE LOOKS AT THEM?

DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?

N..
N...

KISS?

NO.
WHAT?
KISS...

AAAAH!

EATING?

I JUST THOUGHT THAT OUT OF THE BLUE.

NO, IT'S JUST, WHEN YOU CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE A KISS IS SIMILAR TO EATING ..

ARE YOU SAYING THAT EATING AND EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE ARE SOMEHOW ONE AND THE SAME?

H-HOW DO I KEEP THIS GOING I I REALLY SAID A DUMB THING THIS TIME

O-OK SINCE HE ASKED I HAVE TO KEEP THIS GOING RIGHT?

R-RIGHT. EATING.

AFRICAN ANIMALS.

gulp

Really?

YES, THEY ARE.

WOW WHAT A GREAT QUESTION.

AAH! AAAH! HE'S STARING AT ME WAITING FOR AN ANSWER

HIS EXPRESSION WASN'T THAT OF A LEOPARD OR ANIMAL "ATTACKING", RATHER, IT LOOKED LIKE AN ACT OF "PROTECTION".

IN OTHER WORDS, IT ONLY TOOK A SECOND FOR THE STREAMLINED LEOPARD TO DIG HIS TEETH INTO HIS TINY PREY, BUT WATCHING THAT SAME MOMENT IN SLOW MOTION SURPRISED ME.

AFRICAN ANIMALS?

THAT'S RIGHT THEY HAD A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THEM ON TV

IN IT, A LEOPARD ATTACKED A MONKEY.

YEAH?

WHAT A CRAZY CONVERSATION BRO WOULD NEVER SAY STUFF LIKE THIS

.....

I'VE GOT TO WIPE AWAY MY SWEAT

rustle rustle

IN OTHER WORDS, LOOKING AT THAT YOU CAN'T HELP BUT FEELING SOME CONNECTION WITH THE CONCEPT OF LOVE

UH-OH MAYBE THAT WAS A BIT INCOHERENT I'VE GOT TO SUMMARIZE IT MORE SMOOTHLY

SO, WHO WILL BECOME THE LEOPARD?

SURE IS HOT, HUH?

O-OH NO HE WANTS TO SAY SOMETHING PLEASE DON'T ASK ANY MORE QUESTIONS

I...

THE LEOPARD. THAT WOULD BE YOU, RIGHT?

HUH?

I-I-I-I-I'M FINE WITH BEING EITHER ONE REALLY, EITHER WAY!

IT'S DARK, WOODED, AND THE FACT THAT IT LOOKS SIMILAR TO A JUNGLE IS SUITING. LET'S DO THIS.

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE FOR MYSELF I WOULD PICK THE MONKEY. LEOPARD IS FINE TOO. THOUGH

THOUGH I'M FINE WITH EITHER ONE I CAN TRULY BE NEITHER WHAT A MESS.

WHAT DESPAIR

YOU WERE IN HERE, SAEKO?

DIN-NER'S OVER THERE

I'M NOT HUNGRY I FEEL MISERABLE.

GOOD LORD! I JUST SPENT THE LAST TWO HOURS IN A CAFE BRIEFING THE LADIES ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING MY MAR-RIAGE. I'M STARVING! FAMISHED!

LET'S EAT!

Flick

I RAN AWAY.

slam

GOOD NIGHT

EAT BY YOURSELF I'M GOING TO BED.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU RAN AWAY?

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN BECOME OUGAMI-KUN'S LEOPARD, BRO

OU GAMI'S LEO PARD

LEO-PARD HUH?

rustle rustle rustle rustle

THAT'S RIGHT!

IF YOU DON'T HAVE CLASS TOMORROW MORNING, HOW ABOUT WE GO FOR A WALK?

AS A DEMON-STRATION OF OUR TOGETHER-NESS.

SHE MADE BANANA BUN CUSTARD, PROFESSOR!

I see.

LOOKS LIKE IT'S DONE.

MY, A MORNING WALK SOUNDS NICE. MMM, IT'S STARTING TO SMELL WONDERFUL IN HERE.

GOOD IDEA. LET'S DO THAT.

MM!

WELL, LET'S EAT. I'VE BEEN LONGING FOR THIS DESSERT. HERE, HAVE SOME.

TASTED LIKE A DRY SCAB OVER AN ABRASION I JUST WANTED TO PICK OFF

SMELLS GOOD, TOO. LIKE FRAGRANT BANANAS.

MY, IT HAS A NICE FLAVOR, PROFESSOR.

SUCH AN INTRICATE FLAVOR.

BANANA BREAD PUDDING

IT ALSO TASTED LIKE DRY WITHERED LEAVES.

LIKE DRY WITHERED LEAVES

SOME-THING THE MATTER? YOU'VE STOPPED WALKI.

SHALL WE SAY HELLO?

WELL NOW, SEEMS THERE ARE OTHER COUPLES OUT AND ABOUT SINCE THERE ARE NO CLASSES.

THEY SEEM TO BE ENJOYING THEM-SELVES I DON'T WANT TO INTERRUPT, AND I'D RATHER YOU DON'T SPEAK TO THEM EITHER.

NO, THANK YOU.

HEY, YOU!

HEY. HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!

JUST LIKE THE TIME A GIANT SPIDER RAN IN FRONT OF MY FACE

JUST LIKE THE TIME I SAW A FLOODED RIVER FROM ATOP A BRIDGE.

JUST LIKE THE TIME I SAW THE CRIMSON SKY THE NIGHT OF THAT FIRE

WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT HAPPENED?! I COULDN'T MOVE FOR A MINUTE THERE AFTERWARD WAS THE SAME. I FEEL LIKE MY HEART IS GOING TO BURST!?

AH. WHAT SHOULD I DO? AH WHAT SHOULD I DO?! I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING TO BREAK LIKE I'LL BREAK HELP ME. PLEASE, HELP ME!?

YOU CALLED?

YOU?! I DIDN'T CALL YOU!

GO AWAY! OR DO YOU WANT TO BE STRUCK DOWN AGAIN?!

BY WHOM? THE HYPOCRITE? YOU THINK THAT HYPOCRITE WILL COME SAVE YOU AGAIN?

HYPO-CRITE? WHO DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?!

AH HA HA! DON'T PLAY DUMB. GO AHEAD, CALL FOR HIM YELL, "HELP ME!"

WAAH HAHAHA! HEHEHEHE!

TOUGE-SAAAN!

AAAAH HAHAHA!

TOUGE-SAAAN!

YOU'LL BE EATEN BY ME, AND BECOME ME IN THE PROCESS.

COME, MY TASTY MEATBALL.

TOUGE-SAN.

AS IF HE'LL COME. HE'S DONE USING YOU.

SHALL I EAT YOU NOW?

THEN YOU'LL COME TO HATE TOUGE. SOMEDAY, YOU'LL KILL TOUGE.

KYA-AAAA!

KYA-AAAA!

GOT YOU!

KYA-AAAA!

GULP
ゴクン

BITE
かみつく

GULP
ガブ
ガブ
ガブ
GULP

TAP TAP TAP TAP
タタタタタタタタ
TAP TAPPITY

I'VE BEEN EATEN. I'VE BEEN EATEN BY THIS MONSTER.

tap tap tap

rattle rattle ガラガラガッタン

rattle rattle ガラガラガッタン

rattle ガラガラガッタン

click

NO, NO DRUMS. PERHAPS YOU ARRANGED MY FOOTSTEPS TO SOUND AS SUCH IN YOUR DREAMS?

AH, ARE YOU UP?!

WAS SOMEONE PLAYING THE DRUMS?

YOUR FRIEND IS WAITING.

AH. OF COURSE.

ANYWAY, A GUEST IS HERE FOR YOU. OCHAYA SAEKO-SAN.

NO, YOU WERE HOLDING YOUR CHEST THIS AFTERNOON AND JUST FELL ASLEEP THAT WAY. SO I CARRIED YOU IN HERE.

THIS IS WHERE I DROPPED DEAD.

MY HEAD FEELS HEAVY

GOOD AFTER-NOON, OCHAYA SAEKO-KUN.

カチ CLICK

WOW! YOU LOOK TIRED! IRA-CHAN.

HMM, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING OF THE SORT. YOUR EYES ARE AS ACORN-SHAPED AS EVER AND YOUR MOUTH IS, WELL, NORMAL..

MY EYES HAVE TURNED UP AT THE CORNERS TOO, RIGHT? MY MOUTH SHOULD BE BIGGER NOW AS WELL.

HUH? YOUR MANNER OF SPEAKING IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT.

On book. Classic Lit.

BRO WILL BE COACHING THE SOCCER MATCH! DIDN'T YOU SAY THAT YOU'D MAKE SURE TO CHEER HIM ON?

BY THE WAY, YOU'LL COME THIS SATURDAY, WON'T YOU?

HMM, DID YOU HAVE A BAD DREAM OR SOMETHING?

古典Ⅱ

THAT WILL CHANGE IN TIME.

Surely...

On book. Classic Lit.

slam

IRA-CHAN?!

turn

WHY ARE YOU GOING PALE, IRA-CHAN?

OH? YOU'RE SHAKING?

NO, IRA-CHAN JUST HAD A BAD DREAM. I'LL COME BACK LATER.

DID YOU HAVE AN ARGUMENT?

OH, MY. WHAT'S THE MATTER? I'M ABOUT TO BRING OUT TEA.

HUH?

wind blowing

I WANTED TO BRAINSTORM WITH IRA-CHAN ABOUT WHETHER MY EXISTENCE MEANT NOTHING TO HIM OR WHETHER THERE WAS SOME CHANCE WE COULD END UP LIVING TOGETHER

I REALLY DID FALL IN LOVE WITH A GAY MAN. BUT THIS PARTICULAR GAY MAN DOESN'T NEED A WOMAN'S CAMOUFLAGE AS IN IRA-CHAN'S IDEAL THAT'S THE MAIN PROBLEM.

WELL BRO ACCEPT HIS ADVANCES I WONDER?

AAAH, THERE ARE TOO MANY PROBLEMS. WHAT SHOULD WE HAVE FOR ?

WELL I COULDN'T DO THAT TODAY DUE TO IRA-CHAN'S LACK OF SLEEP

IS THIS THE WORLD'S WAY OF SAYING I SHOULD WAIT BEFORE ENDING THE MATTER WITH OUGAMI-KUN?

I WOULDN'T THINK THAT MY BROTHER IS NUMB TO THE FACT THAT OUGAMI-KUN IS IN LOVE WITH HIM.

TOUGE CAN LOSE THAT MATCH FOR ALL I CARE! I HATE TOUGE! HOW DARE HE TELL LIES WITH SUCH A KIND FACE!

WHY DO I HATE TOUGE-SAN?

AAH. WHAT AM I SAYING?

I DON'T HATE HIM I ACTUALLY DON'T DISLIKE HIM.

I... COME TO HATE ALL PEOPLE I... COME TO HATE SARA, TOO EVEN MOTHER AND FATHER AND THE PROFESSOR

THE WORLD THE UNIVERSE I... HATE HATE HATE THEM. WITH AN EXCLAMATION MARK!

AAH I'M SURE THAT MY LOSING TO THAT MONSTER IN MY DREAMS IS THE SOURCE OF IT ALL

JUST LIKE THAT DEMON IN THE EXORCIST

POOR REAGAN

I KNEW IT

I'VE BEEN EATEN BY THAT EVIL MONSTER AND HAVE TURNED INTO AN EVIL MONSTER MYSELF

I'LL COME TO HATE TOUGE SAN MORE AND MORE AND MORE BEFORE I KNOW IT I'LL HATE HIM COMPLETELY

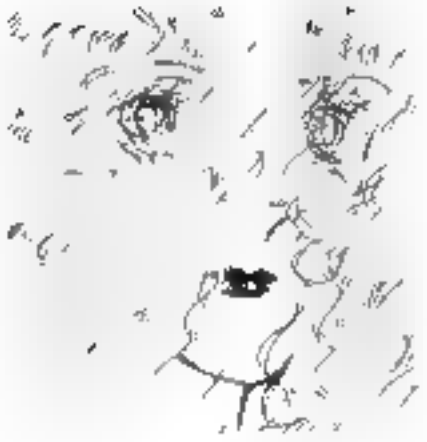
WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO YELL THOSE THINGS?

WHY DOES MY HEART FEEL SO FOGGY?

*See Notes Page

End of Chapter 4

Notes Page
Ch-5



[Page 171, panel 3]: *Non-no is a Japanese fashion magazine targeted at women in their teens and early 20s. Karuizawa is a popular tourist destination in the Nagano prefecture. It is especially well-used amongst Tokyoites looking to get away from the city.*

[Page 177, panel 5]: "Oh, gosh, Black Belt Sazanami!" *The Japanese text is more specific in that it just calls him "fifth degree". In Judo, there are ten degrees of black belts*

[Page 204, panel 1]: "One Cup Kozeki" *is a play on One Cup Ozeki, a real saké product by Ozeki. As the name implies, it's a personal-sized cup of saké.*

Part 5

With the Help of Some Liquid Courage...

I DON'T WANT TO LISTEN TO THE PROFESSOR'S INSISTENT CONVERSATIONS AFTER DINNER

THE PROFESSOR WILL DIE FROM THE POISON

I WONDER IF WE'RE HAVING BLOWFISH FOR DINNER TONIGHT...

BUT WHAT WILL I DO IF THE HOUSEKEEPER EATS THE BLOWFISH FIRST?

"AAH I DROPPED SOMETHING"

WHAT WILL THE HOUSEKEEPER DO?

I WILL SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO STOP HER FROM EATING SINCE SHE DOESN'T BOTHER ME WITH PERSISTENT QUESTIONS BUT IF THE PROFESSOR DIES

SENSE

T/N: Blowfish, or fugu, is considered to be a delicacy in Japan. The fish is poisonous and can be deadly if cut improperly.

*"Sense" could be an alternative way to pronounce "sensei"

BUT I WILL MAKE A GRAVE FOR THE BOTH OF THEM

IT'S KIND OF SAD.

DOING THE HOUSEWORK HERE IS HER PURPOSE IN LIFE SO IF SHE LOSES THIS PLACE SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO GO ON LIVING. ON TOP OF THAT, SINCE THE FAULTY COOKING WILL BE ON HER CONSCIENCE, SHE MAY COMMIT SUICIDE BY EATING THE BLOWFISH HERSELF

"THIS IS A STOCKPILE FOR THE FOOD SHORTAGE THAT WILL SURELY COME."

THAT'S RIGHT. I WILL DIG UP THE EARTH WITHOUT HESITATION

I'LL EVEN SMILE A LITTLE! OOH, I CAN EVEN IMAGINE MY NEXT SOLILOQUY

JUST LOOK AT THESE EYES

LOOK

OOH, I REALLY AM A MONSTER. A CANNIBALISTIC MONSTER

I KNEW IT THEY'RE TURNED UPWARDS AND GLEAMING WITH THIRST

click

I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING I HAVE TO CAMOUFLAGE MY FACE SOMEHOW IN ORDER TO CREATE A NORMAL CASUAL EXPRESSION

IF THAT HAPPENED I'D BE STUCK WITH HIS LONG NAGGING QUESTIONS AGAIN

WHEN THE PROFESSOR SEES THESE EYES HE MAY CHOOSE NOT TO EAT THE BLOWFISH

IS THAT . A NEW HAIR-STYLE ..?

Front

Back

YES. TO CHANGE MY MOOD A LITTLE.

REA . DY..

AH, YOU CAME OUT! DINNER'S...

OH? IT'S NOT BLOWFISH .

LOOKS LIKE DINNER WILL BE GOOD TONIGHT

IT'S CERTAINLY DARING ..

*See notes page

I MUST MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE TO NOT GIVE HIM DIRTY LOOKS, AND INSTEAD ANSWER WITH "YES" AND "THAT'S RIGHT" TO HIS QUESTIONS. LIKE I NORMALLY WOULD

Nag Nag Nag

OH.

I SUPPOSE THAT SOMEDAY BLOWFISH MAY BE SERVED AND THE PROFESSOR MAY DIE A SUDDEN DEATH

I CAN'T MAKE A BLATANTLY DISAPPOINTED FACE THOUGH

IF SOMEONE WERE TO FIND OUT THAT I'VE ALWAYS FELT HOSTILITY TOWARDS THE PROFESSOR, THEY MAY SUSPECT ME OF MURDER.

I THOUGHT YOU COULD WEAR A WHITE DRESS LIKE THE KIND THEY HAVE IN NON-NO, AND WE COULD HOLD A CEREMONY IN KARUIZAWA OR SOMEPLACE LIKE THAT.

THAT'S RIGHT. THAT'S WHY, IN THE SPRING-TIME,

On Book. Camou-flage

WE SURE WILL. BUT BEFORE WE CALL EVERYBODY OUT, I'D LIKE TO MAKE OUR EXCHANGES WITH EACH OTHER ARE FRIENDLIER.

WILL WE INVITE EVERY-BODY?

THAT'S RIGHT A WEDDING CEREMONY!

A WED-DING CERE-MONY?

I WANT TO HAVE A WEDDING WITH THE SUN CLOSE OVERHEAD, THE WARM GROUND UNDERFOOT, THE SMELL OF WILDFLOWERS, AND A SHOWER OF CONGRATULATIONS FROM EVERYONE PRESENT

FLORAL GARLANDS IN YOUR LONG HAIR A WHITE DRESS. EVERYONE'S APPLAUSE YOUR SMILING FACE

LET ME GIVE YOU SOME FLOWERS

WELCOME

OH, A CARRIAGE!

IN THE CASE OF KARUIZAWA, I HEAR THEY HAVE HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGES.

THAT'S RIGHT! WOMEN NEED ATMOSPHERE ATMOSPHERE

I'M SURE IT'LL BE WONDERFUL.

WHAT KIND OF CHURCH WOULD BE BEST? HOW ABOUT ONE TANGLED IN IVY?

I HOPE IT'S SUNNY TOMORROW.

THAT'D BE GORGEOUS.

pop

pop

pop

bang

bang

A CLEAR GLISTENING DAY THAT'S PERFECT FOR SOCCER

THE SNARE DRUMS SOUND, AND FIREWORKS FLY. THE STAR PLAYER IS HERE THE STAR PLAYER IS HERE

THAT'S HOW I THOUGHT T'D BE

MAKES EVERYONE'S HEARTS THROB

EVERYONE CHEERS UNTIL THEIR THROATS ARE HOARSE

BUT IT WAS NO GOOD

A REAL LET-DOWN

AT HALFTIME, THE PLAYERS GATHER AROUND TOUGE-SAN AND THEIR TENSE EROTICISM

EVERYONE CATCHES THEIR BREATH IN ANTICIPATION. THEY CHEER FOR OUR SCHOOL. THE CHEERLEADERS HAVE A LOOK OF PRIDE ON THEIR FACES.

B B B-B

WILL OUGAMI DAICHI LEAD AN OVERWHELMING VICTORY OR WILL THE TEAM BE HAMMERED UNTIL, ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSING, HE WILL WONDER IF THEY WILL EVEN MAKE IT AT ALL BEFORE SECURING A TURNABOUT WIN?

roaring

roaring

roaring

THERE'S NO TENSION.

A CRUSHING DEFEAT THAT WAS OVER IN A FLASH

A MATCH SO INSUBSTANTIAL THAT NO ONE EVEN RAISED THEIR VOICE

TURNABOUT WAS AN IMPOSSIBLE LITTLE WORD.

PERHAPS AS A RESULT OF LACK OF PRACTICE, THEY WERE LOSING THROUGHOUT.

roaring

roaring

roaring

roaring

EVEN THE CHEER-LEADERS SEEM READY TO BUT THE CHEERING SECTION GETS UP AND WALKS AWAY

WERE YOU SCARED?!

EVERYONE MADE A RACKET AS THOUGH THEY WERE RELEASING ALL THE PENT UP ENERGY FROM THEIR EXPECT ATIONS.

WHAT'S THE MAT-TER?!

roaring

CLUB DUES THIEF!

OPEN YOUR EYES!

Aaaah!

SO WE LOST ?

I THINK THAT WITH THE CAPTAIN BEING PREOCCUPIED WITH MY BROTHER THE WHOLE TIME, THE PLAYERS DIDN'T FEEL VERY MOTIVATED

WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE IT HAPPENING

DON'T FORGET THAT THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR!

Yeah

On Door Soccer Club

Good bye

← Mosquito

CO-ACH.

slam

EVERYONE PACKED UP W THOUT A WORD AND WENT HOME THROUGH THE BACK DOOR.

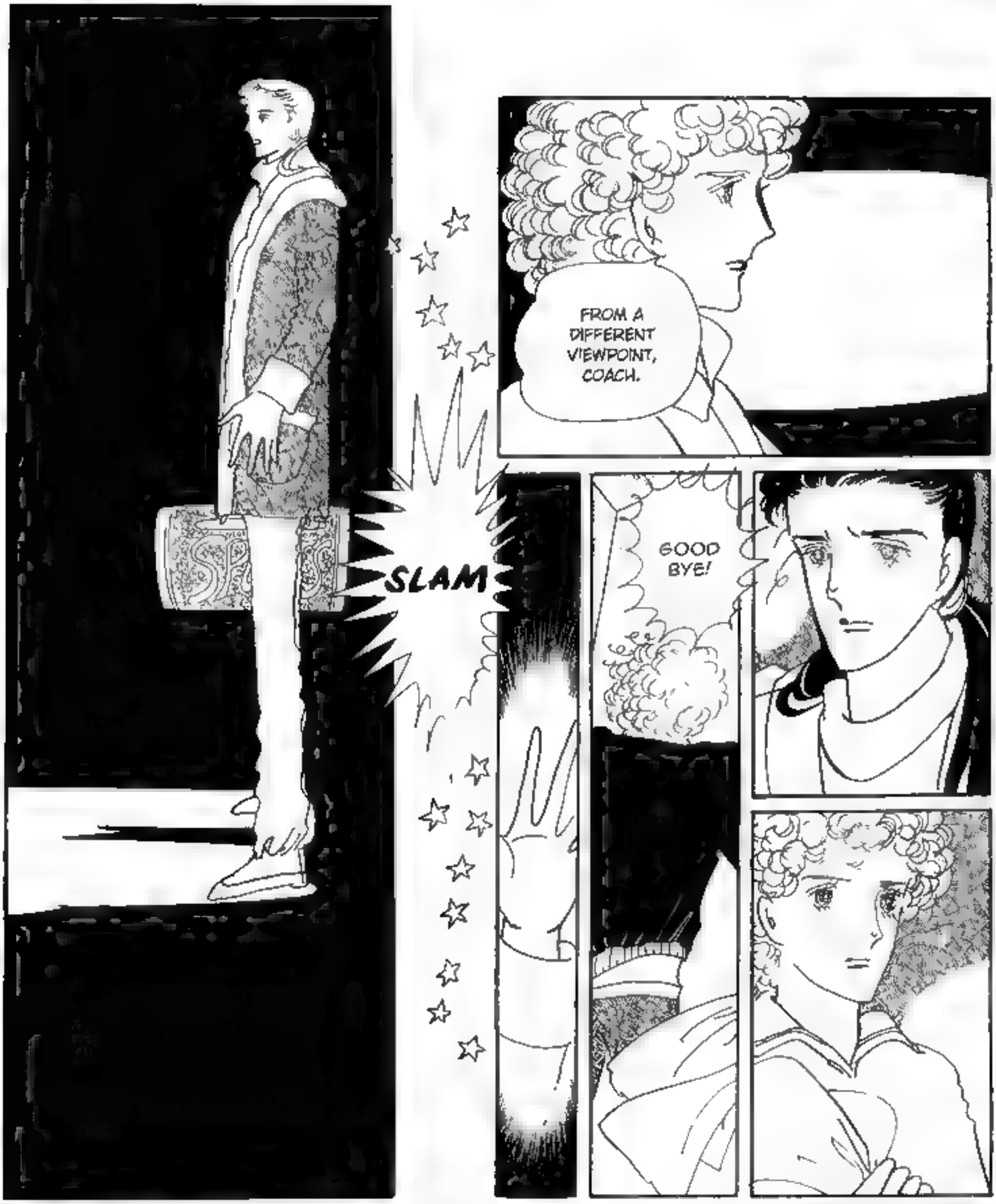
IF I DON'T LEAVE, NEXT YEAR'S MATCH WILL BE JUST AS BOTCHED.

I WILL ELECT A NEW CAPTAIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

ONCE I'M GONE, I THINK I'D LIKE TO WATCH YOU

AS OF TODAY, I'M RESIGNING FROM THE CLUB.

YOU SHOULD GET READY FOR NEXT YEAR TOO. GO HOME AND RELAX!


FROM A DIFFERENT VIEWPOINT, COACH.
SLAM
GOOD BYE!
SQUEAK
IRA...!

HUH? IRA?

KYAAA! IT'S DECIDED, THEN! WHERE SHOULD WE GO FIRST?!

YOU'RE DEJECTED, I KNEW IT! COME ON! LET'S PARTY!

HUH?

NO. I'M GRATEFUL, BUT I'M A LITTLE BUSY TO-NIGHT

SFX: thud thud thud thud

AS YOU SAW, WE LOST. YOU'RE LOOK-ING GOOD .

KYAAA! OCHAYA-SAAAN!

WHAT'S GOING ON? DID YOU COME?

OH, GOSH, BLACK BELT SA-ZANAMI!

OOH! TOO BAD, SO SAD! I'VE ALREADY RESERVED OCHAYA FOR THE NIGHT.

WANNA DRINK?!

YEAH! LET'S GET WASTED!

DOO, DOO

WHAT NOW? YOU GOING HOME? I FIGURED YOU WEREN'T IN THE MOOD FOR SHRILL SCREAMS

THANKS. I OWE YOU ONE.

HE'LL BE DRINKING 'TIL HE'S SICK WITH ME TONIGHT! SHOO, SHOO! DON'T THINK BADLY OF ME!

Oh no! Oh my!

I WANTED TO TALK WITH HER A LITTLE...

IRA WAS HERE JUST NOW, BUT BEFORE I KNEW IT, SHE RAN OFF.

*See notes page

BE READY FOR ANYTHING! ANYTH NG AT A...! I M READY FOR ANYTHING!

IIF YOOU DRIIINK AS MUUUCH AAS YOOU CAN HAAANDLEEEE...!

BRING ME MORE!

ALRIIGHT! THEN IT'S DEC DED!

HAAAVE SOME ALCOHOOOL! DRIIINK! IF YOU DRIIIINK...!

YOU'RE SAYING THAT YOU SHOULD'VE PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND HIS SHOULDERS?!

YEAH! I WISH I HAD PUT MY ARMS AROUND H S SHOULDERS!

THAT GUY LOVES SOCCER! HE SAID HE WAS QUITT NG!

THEN YOU'VE GOT TO PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND HIS SHOULDERS!

rattle

slip

Seth

Resignation Letter

Tobacco

Wind Blowing

rustle

rustle

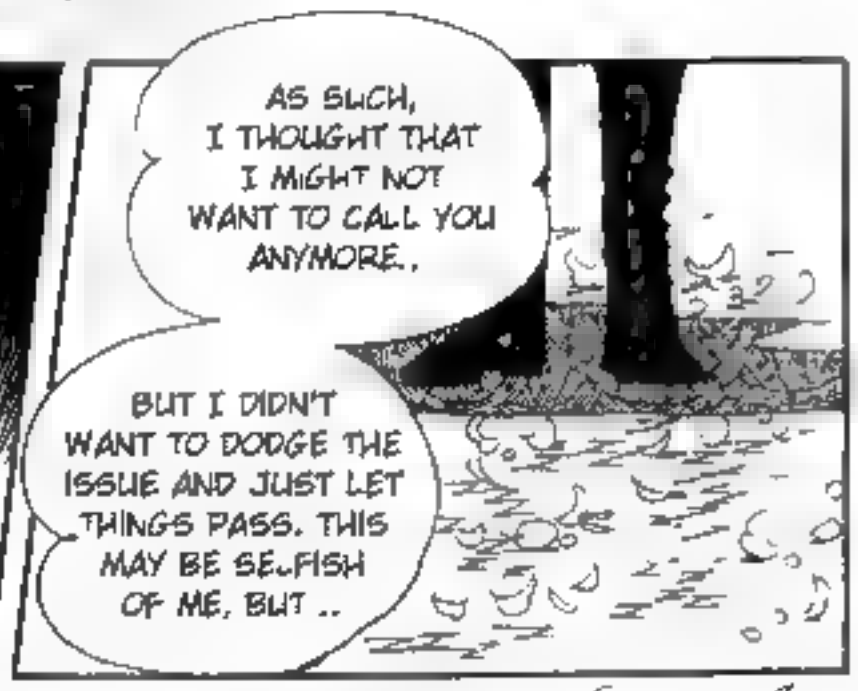
WE HAVEN'T HAD A LOVERS' MEETING IN A WHILE.

.....
...I'M SERIOUS ABOUT IT NOW. I LOVE OCHAYA TOUGE NOT AS PART OF A PLAY, BUT FOR REAL .

IS THAT ALL? THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN RESOLVED. I DON'T BLAME YOU IN THAT MATTER ANYMORE.

I CALLED YOU OVER IN REGARDS TO THAT ACT I PUT ON.

THIS WILL BE YOUR BRAN-DING!
YOU...


AS SUCH, I THOUGHT THAT I MIGHT NOT WANT TO CALL YOU ANYMORE..
BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO DODGE THE ISSUE AND JUST LET THINGS PASS. THIS MAY BE SELFISH OF ME, BUT ..

I CAME HERE TO BREAK UP WITH YOU.

rustle
rustle
rustle

slap

INCUBUS!

STOP
- ALREADY

IT WAS A CRIME FOR ME TO MISLEAD HIM BY DISGUISING MYSELF AS BRO

EVEN AFTER DISGUISING MYSELF AS BRO AND THEN RUNNING AWAY HIS FEELINGS TOWARDS BRO DIDN'T CHANGE ONE BIT

IF THE CROSSING GATE DOESN'T DESCEND

crowding

ゴオオ rumble

click clack click clack

click clack

I CAN'T STEP OUT ONTO THE AUTUMN ROAD HUH?

YOU.

HUH?

HEY, YOU. YOU!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WANDERING ALONG THE RAILROAD TRACKS?

YOUR FACE LOOKS PALE, TOO. ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT "THE FRUITLESSNESS OF MY EXISTENCE" RIGHT NOW?

LIKE YOU SAID. I'M JUST WANDERING AROUND.

AS SUCH, I SEARCH FOR PEOPLE WANDERING ALONG THE TRACKS WHENEVER I CAN FIND THE TIME.

HUH?

LUCKILY I WAS ABLE TO MEET MY ADVISER AND MAKE IT THROUGH WITHOUT DYING. NOW IT'S MY TURN TO BECOME THAT ADVISER.

EEEH? THAT'S RIGHT, BUT... CAN YOU USE TELEPATHY?

I KNEW IT. YOUR SITUATION RESEMBLED MY OWN THREE YEARS PRIOR, AFTER ALL.

A STUDENT. I'M IN MY THIRD YEAR AS A PHILOSOPHY MAJOR AT THE UNIVERSITY BY THE RAILROAD.

WHO ARE YOU?

THAT'S RIGHT! WOULDN'T T BE ALRIGHT TO TELL HIM? I CAN FOLLOW HIS ADVICE WHETHER T'S A COMPLETE MESS OR NOT I DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER ANSWERS ANYWAY IT'S JUST LIKE GAMBL NG

WHAT? WHY'S HE BE NG SO NICE? WELL WHATEVER IT IS TRUE THAT I CAN'T THINK OF ANY GOOD DEAS BUT IS THERE REALLY A PERSON N THIS WORLD WHC CAN SOLVE THE KIND OF PROBLEM I HAVE?

I'D LIKE TO ASSIST YOU. WILL YOU TELL ME WHAT'S BURDENING YOU?

SO YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH A GAY MAN, WERE AT A LOSS FOR WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT, DRESSED UP AS YOUR BROTHER AS A RESULT, AND NOW WANT TO KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT?

THAT'S EASY!

EASY?!

YES, EASY. REVERSE THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND LOOK AT IT THIS WAY

YOU WERE LOOKING TO BECOME ONE WITH YOUR BROTHER FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.

EEEEH?

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU WERE PREPARED TO DISGUISE YOURSELF AS YOUR BROTHER A LONG, LONG TIME AGO.

I WANTED TO BECOME ONE WITH BRO?! I LOVE HIM AND ALL, BUT...

WHEN YOU PUT IT THIS WAY, ISN'T THAT INCEST?!

OR DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE SWEETNESS OF LOVE GAINED?

THINK VEEEERY HARD.

WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD THAT THAT GAY MAN HAD STARTED FALLING IN LOVE WITH YOUR BROTHER, DID YOU EXPERIENCE HEART-RENDING DESPAIR, OR

BEFORE I CAN DEFINITIVELY SAY NO, LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION.

I BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE TO THINK OF THE REASON FOR YOUR ANGUISH OVER LOVING A GAY MAN AS THOUGH IT WERE DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR BROTHER.

YOU JUST HAVEN'T REALIZED IT YET.

FOR SOME REASON I FELT CHEERFULLY HEARTBROKEN, BUT ..

BUT DOES THAT REALLY HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE DESIRE FOR INCEST?

WHAT KIND OF CRAZY TWISTED CONCLUSION IS THAT ? BUT .. WELL N SOME WAY THIS MUST BE FATE

THERE IS A BETTER WAY, BUT IF I CHOOSE TO STUDY ABROAD I WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE BRO FOR A LONG TIME.

SHALL I TRY IT? THERE'S SOME LOGIC BEHIND IT. SHOULD I RETURN TO MY PARENTS' HOUSE, OR.. ?

I SEEEEE.

WELL THEN, FOLLOWING THAT LOGIC, WHERE COULD I POSSIBLY START FROM?

THE BEST METHOD IS TO DO JUST WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU SHOULD: PLACE SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR BROTHER, AND THINK. CALM YOURSELF.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SAY YOU'LL BE LONELY, THE PROBLEM WILL REMAIN AND YOU'LL CONTINUE TO SUFFER. NOW IS THE TIME FOR ACTION.

THAT'S RIGHT! I'VE MADE UP MY MIND! I'M CALLING MY BROTHER TO DECLARE MY INTENTIONS!

HM?

Swan Have they all gone completely mad? Ewa..ahah

CLATTER

OH NO I THINK I M REACTING TO H S SUG- GESTIONS I DON'T HAVE ANY DESIRE TO COMM.T INCEST

MY FINGERS ARE SHA- K NG JUST TRYING TO CALL BRO.

AAAH MY HEART IS POUNDING!

WHAT S THIS?

WHAT POWER OF SUGGESTION.

ARE YOU DRINKING ALL BY YOURSELF, PROFESSOR?

EVEN I GET THE DESIRE TO DRINK SOME-TIMES.

THAT'S RIGHT. I ALREADY SENT MY HOUSE-KEEPER TO BED.

hiccup

WOULD YOU... LIKE ME TO STAY HERE?

NO, I'D BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT YOUR PRESENCE.

AH, WAIT. YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW WHY I'M GUZZLING DOWN ALCOHOL THOUGH I NORMALLY DON'T DRINK IT, RIGHT?

COME OVER HERE AND ASK ME. I'LL TELL YOU.

I'M USING ALCOHOL TO SOOTHE MY SOUL.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND? I'M GOING TO BECOME A SPIRIT AND FLY THROUGH THE HEAVENS! THERE! AND THERE!

WHO'LL CATCH A COLD?! I'M BREAKING AWAY FROM MY BODY!

IF YOU TAKE OFF ALL YOUR CLOTHES, YOU'LL CATCH A COLD, SIR.

.....

THAT IS WHERE I'M SENDING MY DEEP-SEATED GRUDGE CURSE A CURSE!

hiccup

I DID IT! I MUST DO THIS WHILE I'M STILL A SLY YOUNG MAN!

rattle

crash

I WON'T BE FOOLED ANYMORE, NOT EVEN BY THIS WOMANLY FORM OF YOURS. I WON'T BE FOOLED ANYMORE!

PROFE-SSOR!

DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM, OUGAMI? I BECAME A SPIRIT, AND NOW I'VE COME TO KILL YOU.

PROFES-SOR?

...PRO...

PROFESSOR..! PROF..!

flutter

WHAT WAS THAT SOu..

/1°
*
/1°
* crunch
crunch

Aaaaaaaaah!

Kyaaaaaaaa!

NO ONE CAN REWIND THE FILM.

NO ONE CAN REWIND THE FILM.

BECAUSE THERE'S ONE LESS PERSON. BECAUSE SOMEONE WAS STABBED.

WHY IS IT SO DARK? WHY IS IT SO LONELY?

THE KNIFE IS MAKING ME RUN. THE KNIFE IS FORCING ME TO RUN.

WHY AM I RUNNING? WHY DO I HAVE TO RUN LIKE THIS?

THE OCHAYA HOUSEHOLD THERE RE NC LIGHTS ON THEY'RE PROBABLY OUT YES, I M GLAD THEY'RE NOT HERE

IF I CAN DO THAT WHILE I M STILL MYSELF THE MONSTER INSIDE ME WILL DIE AS WELL

NOW I HAVE TO HURRY AND PUT AN END TO IT

IT WOULD BE BEST F I D.ED LKE JULETTE AND PIERCED MY CHEST IN THE EMPTY SILENT WOODS.

KYAAAAAAA!

IRA!

I'll shock him

IRA! IRA, WAIT! STOP!

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING?! IRA, IT'S ME, YOUR MOTHER! YOu MISUNDERSTOOD!

THE HOuSE-KEEPER TOLD ME OVER THE PHONE!

ARE YOU SURE YOU DIDN'T JUST SEE THE PROFESSOR TOTALLY DRUNK AND M SUNDERSTAND?! THE PROFESSOR IS SLEEPING!

SHE SAID THE PROFESSOR D DN'T DIE FROM THAT SCRATCH!

POPS.

IRA.

On Flyer
Help
Wanted
Part-time

Concert

rattle

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND MY SCREAMS YOU DON T UN DERSTAND!

THE EMPTY APART- MENT! I KNOW WHERE THE KEY S

WHY WON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? WHY WON'T YOU COME BACK? LET'S GO HOME. AFTER THAT WE'LL CURE YOU PROPERLY, AT THE HOSPITAL!

I GOT IN'

rattle

LIGHT TURNING ON.

SAEKO?

OCHAYA-SAN, CATCH IRA! PLEASE, GET IRA!

BANG BANG BANG BANG

ACK! WHAT THE ?!

BANG BANG

IRA!

WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU'RE BAREFOOT AND IN A NIGHTGOWN.

THEY WEREN'T GONE?!

OH?

drip drip

THIS IS THE SECOND FLOOR! YOU KNOW THAT! WHAT'S GOING ON?

GOT YOU!

YOU'LL BREAK A BONE IF YOU JUMP OUT THE WINDOW.

WHOA!

WHAT THE HECK IS GOI..

AAAAA-AAAAH!

SHE SUDDENLY FELL ASLEEP WHAT HAPPENED?

WHAT ABOUT IRA?

bang bang

OCHAYA-SAN! OCHAYA-SAN!

DEAR...

AAAAAAA-AAOOOOOH!

.....

YES, COMING.

THIS IS SAEKO-CHAN'S BED ISN'T IT?

STABBING THE PROFESSOR AND INJURING TOUGE-SAN. IT WOULD ALL BE A DREAM. THEN I WOULD WAKE IN SAEKO-CHAN'S BED AS THE IRA I WAS BEFORE BEING EATEN BY A MONSTER, WITH OCHAYA-SAN STILL GAY, JUST LIKE ALWAYS.

SO? HOW GREAT WOULD IT BE IF THIS WERE ALL A DREAM?

THE RADIO IS ON. IT'S A MASS. I KNOW THIS SHOW IT PLAYS FROM 2-3 AT NIGHT

OH! ARE YOU AWAKE? GREAT! LET ME WARM UP SOME MILK, THEN.

Peak...

THEN TOUGE-SAN WOULD SING "WINKLE TWINKLE LITTLE STAR" FOR ME

TOUGE-SAN USED TO LISTEN TO IT AT NIGHT WHILE HE WAS STUDYING? I COULD ALWAYS HEAR IT QUIETLY FROM HERE

AND THEN I'D ALWAYS FALL ASLEEP OVER-LAPPING THE FACES OF TOUGE-SAN AND JESUS.

YOU CAN LEAVE IF YOU'D LIKE, BUT YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER ARE WAITING OUTSIDE.

FORGIVE ME. IT WAS UNFORGIVABLE.

HE COVERED IT UP WITH HIS HAIR, BUT I COULD SEE THE SCAR ON HIS CHEEK

IT'S A REALITY

SAEKO IS GOING ABROAD. AS SUCH, I NEED SOMEONE WHO'LL SIT AROUND THE DINNER TABLE WITH ME.

EVEN IF I WANTED YOU TO STAY HERE? NOT UNDER FALSE PRETENSES THIS TIME. I HAVE A GOOD REASON.

IN BED JUST NOW, I THOUGHT... IF I CAN'T DIE, I SHOULD PROBABLY ALLOW MYSELF TO BE PUT INTO CONFINEMENT.

BESIDES, I'M WARMING SOME MILK NOW

IT'S A REAL, GOOD REASON! DON'T YOU THINK SO?

AT ONE POINT YOU SAVED ME FROM IT IN MY DREAMS, BUT IT FINALLY ATE ME WHILE I WAS SLEEPING AT THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE.

MONSTER ..?

IT'S OK IF YOU THINK I'M STRANGE. OF COURSE IT'LL MAKE PEOPLE THINK I'M STRANGE. THAT HAPPENED IN A DREAM, AFTER ALL. BUT EVER SINCE THEN, I..

BUT I WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME A PERFECT MONSTER.

YOUR REASON IS PERFECT.

EVEN NOW, I'M BARELY RES STING..! THE IRA WHO'S HERE NOW CAN BE TORMENTED W TH PANGS OF GUILT, THOUGH.

I EVEN HATED YOU! I PRAYED THAT YOU'D LOSE THE MATCH! I PRAYED THAT EVERYONE WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED IN YOU!

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT'S NOT THE WORK OF THE MON-STER?!

EVER SINCE THEN, I OCCA-SIONALLY DO THINGS THAT EVEN I CAN'T CONTROL.

I BECOME RULED BY VILE WORDS AND SENSELESS HATRED.

SOMEDAY I COULD EVEN...

FEELING ANIMOSITY FOR NO GOOD REASON HAPPENS TO EVERYONE

MINE'S DIFFERENT! IT'S DIF-FERENT!

I HAVE TO LOCK MYSELF UP. I'LL HARM SOMEONE IF I DON'T DO IT SOON.

COMMIT MURDER

"HERE, HAVE SOME MILK."

IF THAT TIME COMES I'LL QUICKLY PULL AWAY, QUICKLY RUN TO THE KITCHEN, QUICKLY HEAT UP SOME MILK, AND THEN HAND IT TO YOU.

THIS IS ONLY HYPOTHETICAL, BUT

I'D BE OUT OF LUCK IF YOU STABBED ME WHILE I SLEPT.

IN ADDITION TO ASKING YOU TO STAY HERE I'LL HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO PARRY.

HMM...

THEN YOU'LL PROBABLY CALM DOWN. NOD, AND SAY, "SEE YOU TOMORROW."

"IT'LL HELP YOU RELAX."

I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH.

EVER SINCE YOU TOLD ME ABOUT THE ROSE BUSHES.

I M GOING TO TRY
> SAYING IT RIGHT NOW
DRINK THE MILK AND SAY,
"UNTIL TOMORROW."
"SEE YOU TOMORROW."

I
NEVER
EVEN
DREAMT
T

I LOVED THOSE ROSE BUSHES, BUT NOT EVEN IN MY DREAMS DID I IMAGINE THEM TELLING ME THEY LOVE ME

NOT EVEN IN MY DREAMS...

BUT BECAUSE I'M A MONSTER. I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL COME AT THIS MAN WITH A BLADE

THAT'S SCARY

I DRANK THE MILK

snap

FATHER. MOTHER DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME

BUT TOUGE-SAN SAYS THAT HE DOESN'T MIND SO I WILL STAY HERE

IS THAT SO? HAVE YOU CALMED HER DOWN? THAT'S WONDERFUL.

YES, WE'RE FINE, TOO.

THE SNOW IS STICKING.

DOES IT MATTER? WE'RE NOT DONE TALKING!

I'M GOING BACK TO OUR ORIGINAL TOPIC. YOU ...

OOH, LOOK AT THAT!

CLIP-AND-BALL!

CLIP-AND-BALL!

clap clap clap

LOOK!

AH! LET'S START FROM THIS BOTTLE.

AAH, THIS ONE ISN'T OPEN YET.

YEAH, WHAT WILL TOUGE-SAN DO?

HEY, HEY. WHAT ABOUT CLASS TOMOR-ROW?

HEY, HEY. US TOUGE FANS SHOULD KEEP HAVING GET-TOGETHERS LIKE THIS EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.

*See notes page

On Cup: Saké

On Cup: One Cup Kozeki

DON'T GET ME INVOLVED.

YOU'RE JOKING! WHEN ARE YOU CLAIMING THAT I THOUGHT I'D LIKE TO GO BACK INTO MY MOTHER'S STOMACH? AND ACCORDING TO YOU, WHEN DID I COME TO LIKE WOMEN?

THAT'S CORRECT.

THEN ARE YOU REALLY SAYING THAT THIS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE HOMOSEXUALITY THEORY?

hiccup

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU THINK THAT PEOPLE WHO FALL UNDER THE "YEARNING FOR INCEST" THEORY ARE CONFINED TO CASES WHERE THEY ALSO FALL UNDER "WOMB REGRESSION" THEORY.

THAT'S RIGHT.

PERHAPS... IRA-CHAN...?

I CALL THAT WAY OF THINKING "STRINGING TOGETHER" THEORY.

NO WAY! THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE! I LIKE OUGAMI-KUN!

...

I DREAMT LAST NIGHT, MOM.

I SAID TO IT, "COME OUT INTO THE WORLD AND SEE FOR YOURSELF" "THE MOST WONDERFUL THINGS ARE WAITING FOR YOU", I SAID.

"IS IT EASIER TO BE BORN AS A MAN? IS IT EASIER TO BE BORN AS A WOMAN?"

MY BABY, WHO HASN'T EVEN BEEN BORN, SPOKE TO ME.

I ANSWERED THAT IT'S PROBABLY EQUALLY EASY TO BE BORN EITHER WAY, SO IT ASKED...

WHEN I WOKE UP THIS MORNING, I WONDERED WHY I ANSWERED THAT THERE WERE "WONDERFUL THINGS" WHEN I HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN THOSE THINGS FOR MYSELF.

"IF BEING IN THE WOMB IS SO LONELY, WHAT HAPPENS ONCE YOU'RE BORN?" IT SAID THAT IT DIDN'T WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE ANYMORE.

I REALLY DO WONDER. I ANSWERED THAT CHILD WITH SUCH CONFIDENCE.

SARA

Banana Bread Pudding End.